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A SERIES OF MANUALS FOR CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND STUDENTS

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THE PRIEST AND SOCIAL ACTION

BY

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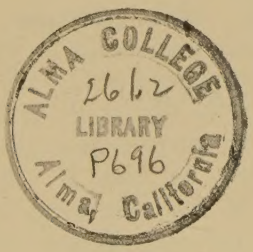
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE BISHOP OF NORTHAMPTON



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK

BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND MADRAS

1914

21004

Nihil obstat:

FRANCISCUS M. CANONICUS WYNDHAM,
Censor deputatus.

Imprimatur:

EDM. CAN. SURMONT,
Vic. gen.

Westmonasterii, die 15 Junii, 1914.

EDITORS' PREFACE.

THIS series of Handbooks is designed to meet a need, which, the Editors believe, has been widely felt, and which results in great measure from the predominant importance attached to Dogmatic and Moral Theology in the studies preliminary to the Priesthood. That the first place must of necessity be given to these subjects will not be disputed. But there remains a large outlying field of professional knowledge which is always in danger of being crowded out in the years before ordination, and the practical utility of which may not be fully realised until some experience of the ministry has been gained. It will be the aim of the present series to offer the sort of help which is dictated by such experience, and its developments will be largely guided by the suggestions, past and future, of the Clergy themselves. To provide Textbooks for Dogmatic Treatises is not contemplated—at any rate not at the outset. On the other hand, the pastoral work of the missionary priest will be kept constantly in view, and the series will also deal with those

historical and liturgical aspects of Catholic belief and practice which are every day being brought more into prominence.

That the needs of English-speaking countries are, in these respects, exceptional, must be manifest to all. In point of treatment it seems desirable that the volumes should be popular rather than scholastic, but the Editors hope that by the selection of writers, fully competent in their special subjects, the information given may always be accurate and abreast of modern research.

The kind approval of this scheme by His Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, in whose Diocese these manuals are edited, has suggested that the series should be introduced to the public under the general title of THE WESTMINSTER LIBRARY. It is hoped, however, that contributors may also be found among the distinguished Clergy of Ireland and America, and that the Westminster Library will be representative of Catholic scholarship in all English-speaking countries.

PREFACE.

CHARITABLE action, in the narrower sense of the term, seeks to *relieve* poverty, misery and sickness. Social action tries to *prevent* them as far as possible by removing their causes. Social action may have exactly the same high motive as Christian charity. There is no antagonism between the two; they supplement one another. Both form part of a parish priest's work, for both have an important bearing on the care of souls.

Many priests in English-speaking countries as elsewhere are experts in charitable and social action. They have acquired that insight into the real needs of society, and especially of the poor, which is peculiar to the clergy. But as they themselves are usually far too busy to write books I have asked them to let me gather their experiences into a volume which might be useful to others.

My grateful thanks are due, therefore, to the many priests at home and abroad who have patiently allowed themselves to be cross questioned on the matter. To them belongs the credit of whatever may be helpful in this little

book. I must also thank Professor Franz and my friend Mr. Toke for valuable help, and the editors of various Catholic magazines and newspapers for allowing me to reprint some of the following pages from their columns.

CHARLES PLATER, S.J.

St. Mary's Hall,
Stonyhurst,
Feast of St. Joseph, 1914.

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INTRODUCTION.

BY THE BISHOP OF NORTHAMPTON.

Social Action, like politics, art, literature, or sport, appeals much more forcibly to some dispositions than to others. Men and women have or have not what they call "a taste" for such things.

The object of this book is to convince English priests that, under our actual circumstances, social action is no longer merely a matter of taste—an interest which can be taken up or laid aside at choice. Social action has become an indispensable phase of our apostolate. For proof, it is enough to refer to the remarkable series of official pronouncements emanating in recent years from the Holy See and the Episcopate throughout the world.

It is instructive to trace the genesis of what is new in this modern development. The intolerable abuses of a social system divorced from religion and frankly based on sheer materialism might have left us weakly acquiescent had not the God of Justice goaded us into activity by the turbulence

of His enemies and ours. Society was clamouring for reform, but its conservative and obstructive elements were also in the main favourable to the Church, while the forward party were mainly unfavourable. It needed the appalling spectacle of the industrial populations drifting to wholesale destruction on a tidal wave of revolution and anti-clericalism to arouse the spiritual forces by which alone social reform can be permanently secured.

To the clergy of such a Diocese as mine, where a lonely priest has to seek a hearing from those who view him with suspicion if not with hostility, social action is the golden key which opens ears and hearts to his influence. Any interest in the public welfare is a passport to public goodwill, as many of us can bear witness. In large centres, social action is not only required as a means of winning fresh souls, but also, even more imperatively, as the condition of retaining the loyalty of workers who are already of the Household of the Faith.

Father Plater's enthusiasm will prove to be infectious. His own record, about which he is modestly reticent, and the record of what other priests, pioneers of the movement, have been able to achieve in isolation, ought to encourage the faint-hearted to attempt something at least now that a national organisation is growing up around them. The Catholic Social Guild alone supplies machinery which the veriest novice can learn to handle, and literature calculated to arrest the stampede of our working class towards Socialism.

It is only a beginning; but a good beginning. For empty denunciation of extreme views, the Guild has definitely substituted endeavour to understand and remedy grievances. That is the only hopeful method. No mere threats or warnings will avert from us the *débâcle* which has overtaken religion on the Continent unless we can make it evident that the Church is on the side of social justice and that She is able and willing to champion the oppressed as strenuously and more effectively than anti-Christian agitators.

The copious bibliography is by no means the least valuable feature of this book. Studious priests will find ample sources of information in the foreign publications to which reference is constantly made. But it is clear that we cannot long dispense with an adequate vernacular literature—a literature vernacular in mentality as well as in language, and adapted to the special needs of our fellow-countrymen, both Catholic and non-Catholic. In this connection, I venture to supplement Father Plater's suggestions by a definite proposal.

The Economics Tripos at Cambridge has been re-modelled recently by Professor Marshall and other Economists of name. In its new form, it aims at imparting a "liberal education" by a course of studies suitable, not only for those who are to become Captains of Industry and Pundits of High Finance, but also "for those who as public officials, as ministers of religion, as the owners of land or cottage property, or in any other capacity

will be largely concerned with 'the condition of the people question,' with public and private charity, with co-operation and other methods of self-help, with harmonies and discords between different industrial classes, with the problems of conciliation and arbitration in industrial conflicts, and so on".[1]

Such a course of studies, under such lecturers as Professors Pigou and Oppenheim, Messrs. Layton, Keynes, and Dickinson, and Dr. Cunningham, affords a unique opportunity for training men who will be capable of bringing our Seminarists into touch with the best English thought on these burning topics, and shaping their Social Action with a precision which only familiarity with men and movements can impart. A Scholarship in Economics, tenable by Clerics at St. Edmund's House, Cambridge, is an urgent need: and, failing an individual Benefactor, the Catholic Social Guild might assume the burden of collecting the necessary funds.

✠ F. W. BISHOP OF NORTHAMPTON.

[1] *Introduction to the Tripos in Economics*, by A. Marshall.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL ACTION.

That the spirit of revolutionary change, which has long been disturbing the nations of the world, should have passed beyond the sphere of politics and made its influence felt in the cognate sphere of practical economics is not surprising. . . . The momentous gravity of the state of things now obtaining fills every mind with painful apprehension ; wise men are discussing it ; practical men are proposing schemes ; popular meetings, legislatures and rulers of nations are all busied with it—and actually there is no question which has taken a deeper hold on the public mind.—POPE LEO XIII. (opening words of the Encyclical *Rerum Novârum*).[1]

THESE words, addressed to the world by Pope Leo XIII. in 1891, are even more true to-day than when they were written. The discussions have become more general, the schemes more bewildering in their variety, popular meetings are multiplied, and social legislation has increased its pace from a canter to a gallop. The public mind is obsessed by social questions.

The old enthusiasm for physical science is giving way to an even more loquacious enthusiasm for social science. Machinery and steam and electricity are no longer regarded as capable of ushering in a golden age; it is to eugenics and the new socialism and sociology that we are told to look for salvation. Society is to be reshaped on scientific principles.

[1] An English translation of this Encyclical entitled *The Condition of the Working Classes* has been published by the Catholic Truth Society in the series of *Catholic Social Guild Pamphlets*. When pages are quoted reference is to this edition.

Dangerous and rash as many of the new sociological theories undoubtedly are, they yet mark a certain broadening of the old-fashioned economic concepts of which we should not be slow to take profit. Economists no longer appeal with the old confidence to the glorious principle of *laissez faire*. They no longer limit their vision to the wealth produced by man, for they are beginning to pay some attention to the man who produces the wealth. They have abandoned a position which Mgr. Doutreloux a quarter of a century ago characterised as "no less contrary to reason and to Christian charity than to social well-being and the very object of the State".

Time was when the British Government refused to help the famine-stricken natives of India, on the ground that such intervention "would be contrary to the principles of political economy". Labour may still be exploited by capitalists; but it is not usually exploited in the name of the eternal laws. We no longer find distinguished and much-respected employers explaining to Royal Commissions that they have no qualms about dismissing adult workers in favour of children, since the discharged adults may safely be consigned to the operation of "natural laws". The earlier economists regarded nature as essentially good. Society should be left to take care of itself. Nothing but harm could result from any attempt to interfere.

These theorists fixed their gaze, not upon the man, but upon the wealth he produced. The man to them was a mere abstraction—a wealth-producing machine. They took this attenuated shadow and isolated it from society. They only allowed for one instinct or tendency in him—the tendency to secure as much wealth as possible with the least expenditure of effort. They tended to overlook his other instincts—social, moral,

religious. Society to them was a mere conglomeration of such abstractions.

Not that there is any harm in making abstractions of this kind—indeed, they are necessary in all sciences. The danger arises when they are treated as complete realities: when, for instance, economic laws in the narrowest sense are made principles of practical life. Now the tendency to employ them as such is almost irresistible unless their relation to higher laws is well understood. They express the truth, but not the whole truth. Hence the English political economists who, under pressure of the popular demand for guidance, elevated their economic generalisations to the rank of social precepts, took up a position against which the Church had ever set her face like a flint. "Make what abstractions you like," she said: "but you must not, in practical life, treat man as though he were merely a producer. He is a man, a member of a family and a citizen, and all these facts affect even his economic life."

We are not here taking sides in the dispute as to what forms the proper subject-matter of the science of economics. That is largely a question of method. But if Political Economy takes no account of man as a social being, its practical application becomes very much restricted.

More than this, the economic relations of men in society cannot be studied in isolation from ethics. Here again, as a matter of method, we may dispute whether Political Economy should be regarded as a branch of ethics or as distinct from ethics.[1] But if we elect to regard it as distinct from ethics, we must not make it independent of ethics. To do so

[1] See the Epilogue to Devas, *Political Economy*, and the Introduction to Antoine, *Economie Sociale*. Paris, Alcan, 9 fr. Catholics are found on both sides.

would be to overlook the social nature of man. Moral conduct has economic bearings of the greatest importance.[1]

It is not necessary to labour this contention, for it is largely admitted in these days when Political Economy is mainly studied for the practical purpose of finding a solution to social questions. Our purpose is rather to show that social questions are not merely moral questions but also religious questions. We have to meet the position of those who welcome morality but insist that it shall be divorced from dogma. Revelation they rule out. They prescind from creeds, which they declare to be none of their business. Social well-being, they hold, may be secured independently of any form of religious belief.

On this matter Pope Leo XIII. has spoken with no uncertain voice. Two quotations will suffice:—

> It is the opinion of some which is caught up by the masses that "the social question," as they call it, is merely "economic". The precise opposite is the truth, that it is first of all moral *and religious*, and for that reason its solution is to be expected mainly from the moral law and the pronouncements of religion.—[*Graves de Communi.*]
>
> We approach the subject with confidence and in the exercise of the rights which manifestly appertain to us; for no practical solution of the question will be found apart from the intervention of religion and the Church.—[*Rerum Novarum.*]

The Pope does not say that the social question is *merely* a religious question. As a matter of fact, it is a highly complex question, and includes various elements, "economic" (in the older, narrower sense) and political as well as religious and moral. But the Pope does "affirm without hesitation" that "all the striving of men will be in vain if they leave out the

[1] See Duthoit, *Vers l'Organisation Professionelle* (Introduction).

Church"; and this statement he justifies at length in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum.* He considers the contribution made by religion to the solution of social questions under the heads of (*a*) doctrine, (*b*) precept, and (*c*) action. The first two may be treated here, the third being reserved for the next chapter.

(*a*) The connection between religious *doctrine* and social welfare is easily established. If we are to deal with the social question we must make up our minds about the nature of man and society, the origin of rights and duties, and so forth. Our social action is bound to be coloured by our views on these matters. Sociology, like education, cannot be "neutral". The denial of religious truth is as much a dogma as its acceptance—and in each case the dogma must affect practical action. If it be an established fact that God is the Author and last end of the human soul and of society, and that He guides us by reason and revelation to a knowledge of our rights and duties, this fact must be taken into account. Otherwise we shall find ourselves back at the old sterile economics. We shall know how to produce certain economic results but we shall not know whether they are worth producing.

There is, in fact, no halting-place between historic Christianity and the denial of all meaning and worth to the world.[1]

To quote from the *Encyclical*:—

> The things of earth cannot be understood or valued aright without taking into consideration the life to come, the life that will know no death. Exclude the idea of futurity, and forthwith the very notion of what is good and right would perish; nay, the whole scheme of the universe would become a dark and unfathomable mystery. The great truth which we learn from Nature herself is also the

[1] See *Christianity and Social Progress* (Bampton Lectures), by F. W. Bussell, p. 314 and *passim.*

grand Christian dogma on which religion rests as on its foundation—that when we have given up this present life, then shall we really begin to live. God has not created us for the perishable and transitory things of earth, but for things heavenly and everlasting ; He has given us this world as a place of exile, and not as our abiding-place. As for riches and other things which men call good and desirable, whether we have them in abundance or lack them altogether—so far as eternal happiness is concerned—it matters little ; the only important thing is to use them aright (p. 24).

This right use can alone produce social harmony. Hence it comes about that belief in a world to come, so far from hindering social reform in this, is its great safeguard and support.

(*b*) The social value of religious *precept* is no less apparent. Pope Leo points out [1] how the moral teaching of the Church has a marvellous and manifold efficacy in establishing harmonious relations between Capital and Labour. It marks out the rights and duties of each, and provides those powerful motives which are most likely to ensure social peace.

Were these precepts carefully obeyed and followed out, would they not be sufficient of themselves to keep under all strife and all its causes ? (p. 23).

So, too, of the great problem of destitution :—

Christian morality, when adequately and completely practised, leads of itself to temporal prosperity, for it merits the blessing of that God who is the source of all blessings ; it powerfully restrains the greed of possession and the thirst for pleasure—twin plagues, which too often make a man who is void of self-restraint miserable in the midst of abundance ; it makes men supply for the lack of means through economy, teaching them to be content with frugal living, and further, keeping them out of the reach of those vices which devour not small incomes merely, but large fortunes, and dissipate many a goodly inheritance (p. 29).

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 22.

(*c*) And here we may note that a great number of non-Catholic writers are not only coming to take the Catholic view that social science is closely connected with ethics [1] but are inclined to agree with us that social action is a part of religion.

This view, which was taken for granted in pre-Reformation England, was obscured after the Reformation. It was never wholly eclipsed, for besides being upheld by the struggling Catholic body itself, it found expression in various reactions against a theory which was too inhuman to claim absolutely universal assent. Glimpses of the old Catholic tradition are to be seen from time to time, as, for instance in the influence of Laud, in the Oxford movement, in the protests of Ruskin, Kingsley, and Maurice, and in the early charitable work of the Nonconformists.[2]

At the present time we find that the various religious bodies in England have taken up social action as part of their business, and that they definitely base it upon religious principles. In almost all cases they have a Social Service Union, the statutes of which make it clear that the connection between religion and social action is not regarded as accidental.

Thus the Christian Social Union has for one of its objects "to study in common how to apply the moral truths and principles of Christianity to the social and economic difficulties of the present time". The Primitive Methodist Union for Social Service takes as its motto, "Those who love for those who suffer," and commits its members to the belief that—

> the regeneration of society will come through obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ. They have no faith in any social reform which separates itself from Christianity.

[1] Some Catholic writers treat it as a branch of Ethics.

[2] See Dr. Karl Waninger's *Der soziale Katholizismus in England*, (M. Gladbach, 1914). 1·85 mk.

In the Cross is to be found the motive power for service.

The Friends' Social Union has as its first object—

To evoke the spirit of justice and social service and to claim the recognition of the Christian law in all human relationships.

Other examples might be quoted: and finally we have the Interdenominational Conference of Social Service Unions (founded in 1910) which constitutes a still more impressive indication of the growing belief that religion and social service are intimately connected.

This belief has had two important general results, over and above the actual social service which has been rendered by those who hold it.

In the first place it has increased the hopefulness with which men regard the prospects of bringing about a healthy social order. So long as the "Classical" economists ruled public opinion, men felt powerless. All they could do was to let "the eternal laws" grind themselves out. There was no place for personal initiative. But the alliance between religion and economics has led men to feel that they can help in reshaping society. It has let them see that not only by political methods but by religious methods they can improve the condition of the people. They recognise the value and efficiency of religious motives in bringing order out of chaos.

Again, they have helped to spread not only a feeling of hopefulness but a sense of responsibility. Because men *can* help they *must* help. Social service is not merely prompted by human pity but commanded by the Divine law. Man *is* his brother's keeper. Considerations of this kind have had the effect of leading a great multitude of men and women to take

up social service or at least to recognise the existence of social duties.

The practical value of giving a religious colour to social activity is now recognised even by those who have no dogmatic beliefs at all. They frequently employ the language and borrow the sentiment of religion to adorn a philanthropy from which they seek to banish all reference to God.

Others, again, though professing themselves unable to share our belief in religious dogma, bear testimony to the social value of such dogma and to the unselfish zeal which is fostered by religion. Indeed, their cordial approbation of our religious beliefs from this point of view is just a little dangerous. It is based upon a mistake which is common enough outside the Catholic Church, and which may even manifest itself to some slight degree in the utterances of Catholic social workers themselves.

This mistake consists in judging of the truth or value of religion merely by its social fruits. Nothing could be more misleading. The claims of religion upon our allegiance is something quite independent of any material benefits which it may bestow upon us. Union with God, friendship with Christ, is an end, not a means. It must be secured at any cost, no matter what material consequences (poverty, sickness, isolation) it may perchance involve. Religion is not true because it is useful, but useful because it is true. *Pietas ad omnia utilis est* said St. Paul: but his *pietas* was not evoked by any calculation of the material benefits to be derived from it.

It is, of course, in some sense true that a religion may be tested by its social results. A spiritual system which is from God will no doubt work itself out on the whole into a healthy social system, for God is the Author of the natural as well as of the supernatural

order. Heresy is fruitful of social discord and, we have seen, Christian morality, based on religious truth, leads of itself "when adequately and completely practised" to temporal welfare. Hence, as we shall see in the next chapter, a very powerful apologetic argument for the truth of Catholicism may be drawn from the study of Catholic social activity. Nevertheless, we need in these days to be ever insisting on the fundamental truth that it profits a man nothing to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul.

CHAPTER II.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SOCIAL ACTION.

WE have considered the social influence of religious dogma and precept: we may now remind ourselves how the Catholic Church in all ages has taken the lead in beneficent social action and has regarded it as part of her normal work.

Her primary aim is, of course, to save souls. She is the divinely appointed channel by which the merits of Christ's redemption are conveyed to individual men. She is the mystical body of Christ in which man is raised from a mere state of nature and made a son of God. Her mission is to sanctify the souls of her children. This she promises and this she performs. Yet, though she promises no more than this, she actually does far more for man than she promises. Man may truly say of her, "All good things came to me together with her" (Wisdom vii. 11).

Active participation in social and charitable work is a real, though a secondary and, as it were, conditional duty of the Church. Priests and laymen, besides the duty of saving their own souls and aiding others to do the same, have the subsidiary duty of relieving poverty and remedying social injustice. In fact that is one of the ways in which they are to save their souls.

(i) We arrive at this conclusion in the first place from a study of the words and example of Christ our

Lord.[1] To feed the hungry and perform the other "corporal works of mercy" is definitely declared by Him to be a condition of our entering Heaven. No more weighty sanction could possibly be given for this duty of a practical interest in the poor.

The words of our Lord as to the duty of helping the poor have been reflected in the writings of Christian teachers in every age, from the exhortations of St. Paul and St. James to the Encyclical on *The Condition of the Working Classes*, which states the attitude of the Church as follows:—

> Neither must it be supposed that the solicitude of the Church is so preoccupied with the spiritual concerns of her children as to neglect their temporal and earthly interests. Her desire is that the poor, for example, should rise above poverty and wretchedness and better their condition in life; and for this she makes a strong endeavour (p. 29).

The duty of assisting our neighbour for the love of God is put before us by the Fathers and by Popes and Bishops in every age. Besides the above-mentioned motive for performing this duty, *viz.*, that God has annexed spiritual rewards to this form of good works, stress is laid on the still higher motive provided by the belief that the neighbour is the child of God. Thus the Church, to quote Dr. J. A. Ryan, "touches all the springs in man's complex nature".[2]

(ii) Moreover, we have the warrant of traditional practice for declaring that social and charitable work is incumbent upon Catholics. For the Church has not been satisfied with recommending such work. In every age she has taken a leading part in it.

The Church, moreover, intervenes directly on behalf of the poor, by setting on foot and maintaining many associa-

[1] See Garriguet, *The Social Value of the Gospel* (C.T.S. 2s. 6d.).
[2] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. *Charity*.

tions which she knows to be efficient for the relief of poverty. Herein again she has always succeeded so well as to have even extorted the praise of her enemies. Such was the ardour of brotherly love among the earliest Christians that numbers of those who were in better circumstances despoiled themselves of their possessions in order to relieve their brethren; whence *neither was there anyone needy among them* (Acts iv. 34). To the order of Deacons, instituted in that very intent, was committed by the Apostles the charge of the daily doles; and the Apostle Paul, though burdened with the solicitude of all the churches, hesitated not to undertake laborious journeys in order to carry the alms of the faithful to the poorer Christians. Tertullian calls these contributions, given voluntarily by Christians in their assemblies, deposits of piety; because, to cite his own words, they were employed "in feeding the needy, in burying them, in the support of youths and maidens destitute of means and deprived of their parents, in the care of the aged and the relief of the shipwrecked."

Thus by degrees came into existence the patrimony which the Church has guarded with religious care as the inheritance of the poor. Nay, to spare them the shame of begging, the common Mother of rich and poor has exerted herself to gather together funds for the support of the needy. The Church has aroused everywhere the heroism of charity, and has established congregations of Religious and many other useful institutions for help and mercy, so that hardly any kind of suffering could exist which was not afforded relief. (Leo XIII., *loc. cit.*, pp. 29-30).

It would be impossible to give here even a bare outline of the charitable and social work undertaken by the Church. The diocesan clergy, the monasteries, the religious communities, the associations of pious laymen have in various degrees helped to build up a tradition in this respect which is without parallel in the history of the world. Dr. J. A. Ryan sums up this tradition as follows:—

Surveying the whole historical field of Catholic charity, we are justified in saying that, in proportion to her resources,

the Church met the various forms of distress of every age more adequately than any other agency or system; that her shortcomings in charitable activity were due to the nature of the peoples and civilisations, and to the political, social, economic, and religious conditions in which she worked; that the instances of heroic charity which stand to her credit surpass by an immeasurable distance all instances of that class outside her fold; that the individual gifts to charity which she has inspired are likewise supereminent; and that, had she been permitted to reorganise and develop her charities without the interference of the Reformation, the amount of social distress, and of social injustice as well, would be much smaller than it is to-day.[1]

We may still sometimes hear it said that mediaeval Catholic charity was undiscriminating and did more harm than good. It is assumed by some critics that the sole motive of this charity was to secure the spiritual advantage of the giver, who in consequence did not trouble to take any account of the needs of the recipient: and hence they come to the conclusion that mediaeval charity *must* have been indiscriminate.

But the Church has never declared that it is meritorious to perform an act which does harm to our neighbour: and as a matter of fact discrimination has been a feature of Catholic charity from the beginning.[2] Vives in 1526 anticipated the modern methods of organised charity, and St. Vincent de Paul and Frederick Ozanam were, each in his way, remarkable for the systematic thoroughness of their methods of poor relief.

Just one point may be noted in the history of Catholic charity: its scope has been as wide as the needs of mankind. The word "charity" to-day is frequently restricted to almsgiving; and, even so, has

[1] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. *Charity*.

[2] See Ehrle, *Beiträge zur Geschichte . . . der Armenpflege*, Freiburg, 1881.

come to have a cold and almost repellent sound, due to the associations with which four centuries of heresy have encumbered it. But the organised charity of the Church has supplied every personal and social need of every class of the community. It has included the ministrations of the deacons, the hospitals of the time of Constantine, the poor relief afforded by the monasteries, the sick nursing of the Beguines, the burial of the dead by the Alexian Brothers, the ransoming of captives by the Trinitarians, the agricultural reforms of the Trappists, even the bridge-building and road-making and protecting of travellers by the "Fratres Pontifices" and the "Montes Pietatis" of the Franciscans and others, to say nothing of the charitable and social work effected by the Guilds under the influence of the Church.[1]

(iii) A third reason why social and charitable work is incumbent upon Catholics is indicated by Pope Leo XIII. in the same Encyclical (p. 33) where he quotes the statement of St. Thomas to the effect that the use of certain bodily and external commodities is "necessary to virtuous action". Poverty—voluntarily chosen or accepted for the love of God—may be a blessing; but there is a grinding destitution which works out as a rule disastrously to morality and religion. Examples of this are all about us. The slum life of our great cities is emphatically not conducive to Christian virtue. Sweated labour is a cause of leakage from the faith. A certain measure of civilisation is normally necessary for the living of a full Catholic life. To this matter we shall have to return.

(iv) Again, the duty of social action on the part of Catholics is suggested by the fact that it is our task and our privilege to "restore *all* things in Christ".

[1] See Ratzinger, *Armenpflege* (Freiburg, 1884), for bibliography.

Religion when fully and freely practised is apt to find expression in all forms of human activity. Just as the truth and beauty of Catholic dogma are reflected in art and literature, so, and with even greater reason, they should embody themselves in a fair and healthy social order. The human polity should be a symbol of the communion of Saints.

(v) Yet another reason for the active participation of the Catholic Church in social action is thus expressed by Cardinal Capecelatro :—

> God Almighty has so constituted the Christian life that in every age, or rather in every series of ages, it appears with a new *apologia*, due to the new conditions of the race. Now, in our day, if I am not deceived, this new *apologia* will be the product of the social question, and progress in that question will most certainly be made in the name of Jesus Christ living in His Church. To the classic defences of the past—to Martyrdom, to the more perfect sanctity of Church, to the doctrine of the Fathers, to the Monastic Life, to the overthrow of barbarous Powers, to Christian art and literature, to the new poetry, to the harmony of science and faith, and to the new forms of charity of the last two centuries—to all these will be added this fresh *apologia*—a solution of the social question by Catholicism and by the science Catholicism inspires.[1]

This form of apologetic, though it is now coming into special prominence, has always had its place in the Church. Tertullian, following Melito, points out that Christianity had been a blessing to the reigns of all the better Emperors.[2] The Fathers frequently dwell on the social virtues which have been engendered by Christianity and which paganism was powerless to produce. Coming to later times we find that Frederick Ozanam was moved to take up work among the poor because he recognised that such work was a hall-mark

[1] *Christ, the Church and Man.* Burns & Oates. 2s.
[2] *Apology*, c. 5.

of Catholicism, and he realised that only thus could he break through the prejudice against the Church which he encountered at the University of Paris.

And so finally in our own days we find Cardinal Vaughan calling upon the Catholic laity to take an active part in charitable and social work, for this reason among others, because by so doing they will lead their countrymen to a knowledge of the true Church :—

> The English people is capable of recovery from the wounds made by sin and neglect, however deep-seated the disease: *fecit nationes sanabiles.* But to effect their conversion, in addition to prayer and preaching, they need to see Christ moving among the multitude, healing their infirmities, in the person not only of priests, but of Catholic men and women, like themselves bound by no official duty.
>
> The English people are more readily convinced by deeds than words. When they shall see educated men and women of the upper classes, perhaps delicately nurtured, devote a substantial part of their life and of their fortune to bettering the lives of the poor—when they shall see them working earnestly and humbly in subordination to their clergy—then will the English people turn to them instinctively with respect, and bow down before the religion which has presented Christ to them in so admirable a social form.[1]

(vi) And lastly, we come to the deepest reason of all why Catholics consider it a part of their religion to concern themselves with social and charitable work. As has been indicated, their motive in so doing is not merely the thought of the spiritual benefits which will thereby accrue to themselves, though this motive is a laudable one and is sanctioned by our Lord. They are led to take a practical and sympathetic interest in the poor and suffering for a nobler reason : in the poor and suffering they see Christ Himself. This is supernatural love of one's fellow-men in the highest degree.

[1] Inaugural Address, C.T.S. Conference, Stockport, 1899.

It is the most far-reaching and beneficent social influence in the world.

It is most far-reaching because its scope extends to all human beings. In each man, woman, and child it sees an image of God—something, that is to say, unspeakably precious. Moreover, it regards the poor and suffering as in a special way bearing God's image and taking Christ's place. Our Lord is amongst us in the person of his poor by a kind of second "real presence" as a French writer has put it. All the impetuosity and heroism of love, the steadfastness, the devotion, which the Catholic can quicken in his heart for his Lord and Master he pours out upon each and every representative of that Lord who may come his way.

We see at once how immeasurably such love surpasses mere philanthropy as a social force. Philanthropy is apt to rest upon one of two sentiments. It may rest upon mere human sympathy; and in that case it is apt to vary with the attractiveness of the object upon which it is expended. It is apt to be chilled by ingratitude, to withdraw into itself when it meets with moroseness, selfishness, obstinacy. It is apt to be self-seeking and to rest on the pleasurable sentiments which follow the performance of a benevolent act. It is a well-known psychological fact that we are more kindly disposed towards those on whom we have conferred benefits than on those who have conferred benefits on us. This natural pleasure may interfere with the universality of our charity if the latter rests on merely human motives.

Again, the stability of our charity depends upon the value of the good which it seeks to confer. Aristotle in the last part of the *Nichomachean Ethics* has given us a subtle analysis of friendship, and shown that the only true and stable friendship is that which

seeks to promote the highest good, which links us with our fellow-men in the pursuit of goodness, which is evoked by what is most God-like in man. Such friendship (friendship in Christ, as we should say, or charity) stands firm. An interest in others on account of their utility to us or on account of their sociability is apt to be unstable and fickle. The love of the Saints for their fellow-men is increased rather than diminished by ingratitude. It goes too deep to be disturbed by such accidents. It seeks out the best in man—the real man, the permanent underlying likeness to God or capacity for union with God. The Saints are optimists and they are the most universal lovers of their brethren. Wishing the highest good for each member of the human family, they are not weakly sentimental but strong and undeterred by rebuff.

But social reform may be prompted not by personal sympathy but by a fastidious dislike for the sight of poverty, dirt, and suffering. Destitution may be combated not because it leads to sin but because it is unsightly.

Now a motive of this sort may have its use as a subsidiary appeal to the complex human heart: but when given the first place it is apt to produce a want of sympathy which is fatal to the cause which it seeks to promote. It leads us to regard the poor as "cases," to lay far too much stress on the influence of environment, to develop an impatience and intemperance of speech very alien to the delicate and universal charity of the Saints, to foment class divisions, and finally to give up the game in despair. The poor, so to say, "get on our nerves" instead of finding their way to our hearts. They become problems instead of brothers. We become blind to the place held by suffering in the fatherly Providence of God. All this tends to diminish the effectiveness of our social activity.

Social and charitable work, then, forms a normal though secondary part of the work of the Catholic Church, a work which is particularly incumbent upon Catholics in these days. This being so, we might at once presume that the obligation of performing it presses especially upon the clergy, since, as we have seen, it has a direct bearing upon the spiritual activities of the clergy, and since, too, the clergy must needs be specially concerned in a work which is so closely bound up with apologetics and the propagation of the faith. That this is actually the case we have now to see.

CHAPTER III.

THE PLACE OF THE PRIEST IN SOCIAL ACTION.

SHOULD the clergy take part in social and economic movements? The question has been hotly disputed upon the Continent of recent years: disputed, that is to say, among the clergy themselves, for we are not here concerned with objections against "clerical interference" brought by those whose instinct is to hit the biretta wherever they see it.

On the one hand, it has been argued that the study of economic questions, the establishment of sanitary dwellings and cottage gardens, labour bureaux and Raiffeisen banks, co-operative and benefit societies, form no part of a priest's sacerdotal duties. Even were the clergy able to find time for such matters, their time, it is held, would be better spent in extending and intensifying their purely spiritual activities.

On the other hand, it is urged that, although not all priests are called upon to take a direct and personal share in social and economic enterprises, yet it is eminently desirable that a large number of them should do so; and this for reasons which shall be set forth presently.

These discussions among the clergy have gradually resulted in a certain measure of substantial agreement. On the one side the advocates of social work among the clergy have made it clear that they are under no misapprehension as to what are the primary and

essential duties of the priest, and that their aim is to exalt and safeguard rather than to depreciate his supernatural functions. They have dissociated themselves markedly and entirely from certain perverse and uncatholic views which have drawn down the condemnation of Rome.

On the other side, those who formerly advocated the policy of abstention have been brought to acknowledge that some degree of social activity among the clergy is rendered imperatively necessary by the circumstances of our time. And if any doubt remained on the matter it has been removed by the voice of authority. The Holy See has explicitly encouraged social activity on the part of the clergy, and a large and increasing number of Bishops now advocate it in the clearest and most distinct terms.

It is the purpose of the present chapter to consider some of the reasons which have been urged in favour of social work for the clergy. Subsequent chapters will describe some of the forms which that work has taken of recent years on the Continent.

Why, then, should a priest concern himself with social and economic questions? The reasons have been well set forth by Père H. J. Leroy, the pioneer of that very striking movement, *l'Action Populaire.* In his pamphlet *Le Clergé et les œuvres sociales*,[1] he points out that the priest is called upon to interest himself in such questions, first because he has received an authoritative mandate to do so from his ecclesiastical superiors; secondly, because modern circumstances demand it as a condition of exercising his spiritual functions efficiently; and thirdly, because Christian charity requires it. These reasons may be considered in order, though we need not adhere strictly to Père Leroy's arguments.

[1] Published by *L'Action Populaire*, Rheims.

(i) The Holy See, while condemning certain exaggerated and even false social theories which have from time to time been advanced by individuals or small groups among the clergy, has given the warmest encouragement to priests who have undertaken social work on sound Catholic lines, and has exhorted others to follow their example, at the same time stating the reasons which make such initiative on the part of the clergy particularly desirable at the present day.

All will remember how, in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII., after giving a vividly realistic description of the evils of the modern capitalistic system, and sketching the dislocation of society in which it has resulted, goes on to prescribe the remedies for what has become an intolerable state of things. Christian morality must be reinstated, justice and charity made effectual realities, property brought within the reach of the proletariat, a living wage insisted upon, Sunday rest secured, and industrial conflicts prevented. And special stress is laid upon the need of association.

The Pope makes it perfectly clear that the Catholic Church has an important part to play in this great work of reformation. The Church must not merely set forth her principles. She must translate them into practice. Her duty in the matter does not end with the declaration that the injustice is to be removed. She must labour to remove it. She cannot leave the solution of the problem entirely to the civil authorities. She must co-operate with those authorities in the effort to solve it.

It is clear that a work in which all Catholics are called upon by the Holy See to take part must be a matter of special concern to the clergy. Though lay co-operation is essential, priests have their peculiar obligations in the matter by reason of their position

and personal influence. And so we are not surprised to find the Holy See laying particular stress upon those obligations and praising the efforts of priests who in various ways have taken the initiative in social enterprise.

A few well-known passages may be recalled:—

Every minister of holy religion must bring to the struggle the full energy of his mind and all his power of endurance. Moved by your authority, venerable Brethren, and quickened by your example, they should never cease to urge upon men of every class, upon the high-placed as well as the lowly, the Gospel doctrines of Christian life; by every means in their power they must strive to secure the good of the people.[1]

In any enterprise of this kind, with which the interests of the Church and of Christians are so closely bound up, it is clear that the priesthood ought to be throughout concerned and that it may assist in many ways by its learning, its prudence, and its charity. More than once, after speaking with some of the clergy, we have thought it right to declare the advantage in these days of going amongst the people and speaking to them in a wholesome way. Often in letters addressed to Bishops and others in Holy Orders, even within recent years (to the General of the Order of Friars Minor, November 25th, 1898) we have praised this particular loving care of the people, and have said that it specially belonged to both orders of the clergy.[2]

We know well, and the whole world likewise knows, the qualities which distinguish you. There is not a good work of which you are not the inspirers or the apostles. Obedient to the advice given in our Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, you go among the people, the working men and the poor. You seek by every means to help them, to improve their morals, and to render their lot less hard. To this end you arrange meetings and congresses; you found patronages, circles, rural banks, offices for finding employment for the

[1] Leo XIII., *Rerum Novarum*.
[2] Leo XIII., *Graves de Communi*.

working class. You labour to introduce reforms into the economic and social order, and for so difficult a task you do not hesitate to make considerable sacrifices of time and money. For the same purpose you write books and articles in newspapers and periodicals. All these things are in themselves very praiseworthy, and you thereby give evidence of your good will, and your intelligent and generous devotion to the pressing needs of modern society and of souls.[1]

By an effectual propaganda of writings, by stirring oral exhortations, and by direct aid let him [the priest] strive to ameliorate, within the limits of justice and charity, the economic condition of the people, favouring and furthering those institutions which tend in that direction. . . . In this way the help of the clergy in works of Catholic action aims at a highly religious object and will never be a hindrance, but will even be of assistance to the spiritual ministry, enlarging its sphere and multiplying its fruit. The social question deserves to have all the Catholic forces applied to it with the greatest energy and constancy. . . . Take thoroughly to heart the interests of the people, and particularly of the working and agricultural classes, not only instilling into the minds of all the religious principle, the only true fountain of consolation in the troubles of life, but endeavouring to wipe away their tears, to assuage their sorrows, to improve their economic condition by well-adapted measures. . . . These good works should correspond fully to the wants of society to-day and be well adapted to the moral and material interests of the people.[2]

Some other passages will be found quoted in an Appendix.

The clergy, then, have been encouraged by the Holy See to take up social action. But can it be said that they have been *ordered* to do so? Is there any real obligation resting upon the individual priest to concern himself with social questions?

[1] Leo XIII., Letter to the French Clergy, 8th September, 1899. See *Rome and the Social Question*, pp. 16, 17. C.T.S.

[2] Pius X., *Letter to the Italian Bishops*, 11th June, 1905.

Some Catholic writers have held that there is. The Abbé Gayraud has said :—

> Social action is, for the clergy of France, an obligation, a duty, a grave necessity. . . . It is a duty of justice and fraternity.[1]

Others, while admitting that this is true if by social action is meant merely that "beneficent Christian action among the people," of which Pope Leo XIII. speaks in the *Graves de Communi*, will not allow that every priest is strictly ordered by the Pope to study social science and to organise social-economic undertakings. The Abbé Millot, for instance, points out[2] that this is a matter for specialists, and though he would like to see such a specialist in every presbytery, he thinks that there are other fields of apostolic work besides "social action" in the strict sense of the term.

The exhortations of Leo XIII. and Pius X. have been echoed by Bishops in every part of the world. Here our documents are simply overwhelming, and the temptation to multiply quotations demands severe self-restraint. It is clearly impossible to convey in a few short extracts the impression created by the vigorous and weighty pronouncements of scores of Bishops. Yet some effort must be made to indicate the very definite trend of episcopal feeling in the matter, since it will furnish us with an answer to those who may still maintain that the Church does not encourage her ministers to co-operate in social reforms. At the same time we shall gain fresh motives for confidence in the power of the Church to heal the wounds of society, and a deeper insight into

[1] *L'Action sociale du prêtre moderne*, *Revue du Clergé français*, 1st August, 1900.

[2] *Que faut-il faire pour le Peuple?* pp. 417-20. Paris: Le Lecoffre, 1901.

the mind of the Church as regards the weightiest problems of the present day.

We shall presently see something of the attitude of the German episcopacy in the matter. Suffice to say here that the priests of Germany, who are pioneers in social work, have the very warmest approbation and encouragement of their ecclesiastical superiors, and that their splendid initiative may be traced to the impulse given to social work among the clergy by Bishop Ketteler.

The Belgian Bishops, too, as might be supposed, have laid much stress upon the need for social action by the clergy. Thus Mgr. du Roussaux, Bishop of Tournai, in the course of an allocution delivered to the Deans in 1895, spoke as follows :—

> The troubled times in which we live demand something more of us [than the ordinary exercise of the sacred ministry]. . . . Our principal duty is to instruct the people. To acquit yourselves adequately of this high mission you must begin by instructing yourselves, by studying those questions which are raised all about us : you must do this, not in order to find material for academic discussions, but in order to enable yourselves to win back those who have gone astray, to fortify those who have not yet been tainted by error, to give seasonable advice on the various points as to which your opinion may be asked. . . . The starting-point of your studies should be the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. The more you study it the more you will grasp its spirit. . . . But it is not enough to instruct the people, you must also, as far as may be possible, satisfy that craving for well-being and that desire for an improvement in their lot which torment them. You must prove to them by deeds that the Church, so far from being opposed to these aspirations, wishes to promote and herself to take in hand the cause of the weak. . . . Do not be rebuffed by the oft-repeated objection : " Concern yourselves with the spiritual interests of the people and leave to others the care of their temporal

interests". Did not Jesus Christ Himself begin His mission by spreading about Him temporal benefits? . . . Besides, since the salvation of souls is our supreme law, we cannot justly be accused of going outside our proper sphere if, in order to get at souls we have to concern ourselves with these material interests. Now it cannot be denied that the only available means of getting at the souls of a great number of working people is by assisting them to secure that welfare to which they aspire, and that it is only by the body that we can reach the soul.

Mgr. Doutreloux wrote to his clergy in 1894 :—

The material condition of this multitude must be improved. They feel it, they demand it, justice and charity enjoin it. Now the priest is the defender of justice and the minister of charity. Let him take in hand this cause which it is his divine mission to protect.

Cardinal Goossens in the same year wrote :—

It is impossible to tell of the beneficent influence which a priest will acquire by occupying himself intelligently and devotedly even to the material wants of the working classes.

Fifteen years later we find Cardinal Mercier[1] calling on the priests of his diocese to carry on the work with redoubled vigour, for though much has been done, "a vast field lies open to your pastoral activity. Work in it with generosity and patience. Support and develop social organisations where they exist: create them where they are lacking."

The views of the French Bishops may be found set forth in a bulky pamphlet published by *l'Action Populaire* in the series *Actes sociaux*. Some suggestive references and quotations are also given in the *Guide Social* for 1907. As a specimen we may quote some words written by the Bishop of Périgueux, Mgr.

[1] Cf. *Actes Episcopaux, Belgique.*

Delamaire, to *La Croix* (August, 1906). The Bishop points out that it is the special duty of the priest to create the atmosphere necessary for successful social reform by diffusing among the people sentiments of justice, unselfishness, devotion to the common good, and consideration for the weak. He then continues :—

The priest should not dream of exercising this great and noble function without personal effort and suitable preparation. If he wishes to influence the masses he must, without neglecting the essential duties of his sacred ministry, namely, the sanctification and salvation of souls, learn how to present the Gospel and Christianity under aspects which have relation to social life, the temporal welfare of the individual, and civil and political utility. He must accustom himself, when giving instruction of this kind, to exhibit religion to his auditors, according to their age and degree of education, as exercising a perpetual and very real influence upon the welfare of individuals and societies.

He must convince the young in schools and societies, and the faithful who listen to him in church and elsewhere, that religion leads not only to Heaven, but also, by the practice of Christian duties, to prosperity and happiness in the present life.

After reproaching certain Catholic Colleges for neglecting to instil into their pupils (especially of the wealthier classes) an appreciation of their social duties, the Bishop goes on to observe that such social instruction is entirely in accordance with the traditions of the Catholic Church. He then continues :—

To succeed in this direction the priest must pay increased attention to his social apostolate, and must, in his direct relations with the temporal concerns of his flock, acquire a kind of habit of keeping Catholic doctrine constantly before his eyes. If he does this he will speedily be astonished at the amazing fecundity of his thoughts, and in consequence of his words.

In view of the recent growth of interest in social work among the clergy in some parts of Spain it will be interesting to observe in what weighty terms the Spanish Bishops have given their approval to this movement.

The Bishop of Badajoz, in the course of an important speech delivered at Grenada in 1907, spoke as follows of the social activity of the clergy :—

As for us, what are we doing? We remain in the sacristy just as the priests did in the eighteenth century, waiting to be summoned to confess the sick or to be called in to patch up family squabbles or to be consulted on a case of conscience: we do not see that in this present twentieth century the sick are dying wholesale without the sacraments, married couples are separating by common consent, and that cases are solved by reference not to conscience but to convenience. Our duty is precisely to come out of our sacristies and churches and cathedrals and monasteries without losing the spirit of God and without neglecting to invoke the assistance of Heaven. We must ascertain the actual condition of society, study its necessities and labour unceasingly, not only with the poor but with the rich, in christianising everybody and everything, in "re-establishing all things in Christ," according to the motto of Pius X., learning modern tactics and employing the same weapons as our adversaries. . . . Leo XIII. commands us to "go to the people" and praises a loving solicitude for the people, saying that it befits the clergy both secular and regular. Pius X. repeats and confirms these directions. . . . It is of urgent importance, then, that the clergy who emphatically ought to be the soul of every enterprise accomplished in the name of Christ and His Church, should undertake a vigorous campaign of Catholic social action.

The Bishop of Madrid on the same occasion spoke as follows :—

The priests must go to the people and strive to introduce economic and social reforms among them, they must shirk

no sacrifices in the matter. What we have to do is to combine the apostolate of the workman by the workman with the apostolate conducted by the priest.

Quotations of this kind might be multiplied from the speeches and writings of the Spanish Bishops. In many cases they go on to instance the particular social works in which the co-operation of the clergy is desirable—rural banks, syndicates, and so forth.

The Italian Bishops have addressed their clergy in the same strain. Thus, for instance, the Bishop of Bergamo has written as follows:—

> Society has manifest need of authority, of liberty, of justice, of charity, of the Gospel, of Jesus Christ, since it is Christ who must re-establish all things. But neither authority nor liberty, nor justice, nor charity, nor the Gospel, nor Jesus Christ will be given us save by the priest and with the priest. This is no question of secondary importance for society; it is a question of life or death.
>
> Hence there clearly arises the duty of the priest to take his place in the modern social movement, and to occupy it with dignity and prudence. To ask whether the priest can occupy himself with all that concerns the very life of society, and especially of the bulk of the people, of this Christian democracy, is to ask whether the priest ought to be a priest. His duty, his purpose, his mission is to devote himself entirely to the good of souls in every phase of human life—the individual, the family, the school, law, government, social class, society. He ought to be, with his Divine Master and like that Master, the saviour of each and all, even to suffering and to death. This matter I believe to be entirely beyond dispute, especially after what the Pope has said and done.

(ii) The second reason which is alleged in favour of the participation of the clergy in social work is that such participation is often in these days a necessary condition for the effective exercise of the priest's spiritual ministry.

In other words, the priest must get at people before he can do them any good ; and it is becoming increasingly difficult to get at them except in the field of social work. This point is frequently insisted upon by Catholic Bishops on the Continent, and deserves careful attention.

Everything in these days depends upon organisation. No interest can be secured without it. Labour must organise (as Leo XIII. so often pointed out) or it will be exploited by capital ; the professions must organise, commerce and industry must organise. The same tendency is seen in education, research, sport, and pleasure, as well as in politics and finance. We have to deal less and less with the individual and more and more with the organised group, or at least with the man as a member of an organised group. The people are crystallising into a number of new combinations, and everything will depend upon the type of organisation which they elect to form. We shall inevitably be dominated by organisations—but of what kind are they to be? We cannot check the process ; the best thing we can do is to try to influence it. Labour (to take one example) will organise whether we will or no. Hence it would seem to be our duty to guide, so far as may be, the organisation of labour towards a Christian type, to impress upon it our fundamental beliefs as to man's destiny and duties, the rights of the parent, the sanctity of marriage, the responsibilities of labour, Christian justice and charity, and so forth. Too often is the process of labour organisation left in the hands of those who hold views on all these matters diametrically opposed to our own. To the priest, as a Christian teacher, it clearly belongs to bring Christian influences to bear as far as possible on the movement. If he leaves it to develop on merely secularistic lines he will find his flock entangled in organisations which will

blunt their religious sense, withdraw them from Catholic influences, and secure their acquiescence in principles which the Catholic Church has always held in abhorrence.

Again, it is becoming increasingly necessary for the priest to take his place as a member of the various social groups (and especially as a member of those groups which aim directly at social reform) in order to keep in touch with his own flock. Parochial visiting in these days will not suffice. Men and women are becoming more and more inaccessible to the priest who has no "social" status. They are not to be found in their homes, partly because home life is degenerating and giving place to club life, and partly because their activities are increasingly absorbed and controlled by the State, the municipality, and the large employer. Take for instance the large number of Catholics in public institutions—prisons, workhouses, and so forth. The priest must have a social status if he is to get at them. He must have a well-defined and acknowledged position among those who control these institutions. Whatever be the upshot of the Poor Law Commission, the priest will have to take an active interest in the matter unless he wishes to find himself cut off from those of his flock who are affected by the new machinery of poor relief. He is scarcely likely to be welcomed by public authorities merely on account of his possession of sacred Orders. But he will be welcomed if he is known to be a zealous and experienced social worker whose counsel and influence cannot be dispensed with.

Unless the clergy shall be able and willing to understand, appreciate, and sympathetically direct the aspirations of economic democracy, it will inevitably become more and more un-Christian, and pervert all too rapidly a larger and larger proportion of our Catholic population.[1]

[1] Rev. John A. Ryan, D.D., *Catholic World*, September, 1910.

Social action is demanded of the priest not merely as a hobby or diversion, but as a necessary condition of his directly spiritual activities. It is not a mere avocation, but part of his vocation. For, after all, his vocation is not only to say Mass, preach, and administer the sacraments, but also to get people to Mass and sermons, Confession and Communion ; and many of the obstacles which hinder the faithful from the practice of their religion are social rather than religious obstacles. Many of the causes of our immense leakage lie deep in social conditions.

Here, for instance, is a parish where perhaps a fifth of the Catholics are at Mass on Sundays. The excuse of most of the remainder is that they have " No clothes, Father ". Often enough they have no clothes, not because the men are earning no money, but because a surprising amount of their wages goes in drink. But why do they drink? In large measure because their homes are unattractive—the wife a slattern, the children unkempt and peevish. The line of least resistance is the public-house—or the so-called club, where large quantities of execrable beer are drunk on Sundays. There is no Catholic atmosphere in which the men may foster their self-respect : there is no Catholic public opinion which may keep the younger men from becoming slouching topers like the rest. If these men and their families are to re-discover the way to church a social avenue to that half-deserted edifice must be constructed. It is not almsgiving that is wanted, but social work inspired by Catholic motives.

In the interest of religion all are called upon to remove, so far as may be, the causes of destitution and degradation. A certain degree of civilisation is normally necessary as a preliminary to sanctification. The initial work of wise foreign missionaries is often the production, among the people they desire to con-

vert, of a stable social order. The family must be established, drunkenness checked, thrift and industry inculcated, the rudiments of agriculture, it may be, taught, before the people are capable of receiving religious instruction with profit. These preliminary efforts of the missionaries are not to be regarded as bribes. They are not in the same category with glass beads and airs on the cornet. They are a direct psychological preparation for the Gospel—a making straight of the crooked paths of the human intellect and will. So were the foundations laid in Paraguay, and so (to take one splendid instance) are they being laid by the Trappists in South Africa to-day.

Priests whose work lies in the slums of our great cities will have no difficulty in admitting that the methods of the foreign missionary may well find their place in certain parts of England to-day. Social amelioration is to a large extent prerequisite to acceptance of the Gospel message. For the degraded poverty which we see about us is something very different from the poverty commended by Christ. The latter strips men's hearts of human cares and attachments; the former weighs down the spirit of man with a crushing and demoralising solicitude for the immediate needs of the body. Hence the priest, it is urged, may well stand forward as the promoter of social reform.

> The relief of the pressing need of the body (writes Bishop Hedley) is, indeed, as a rule, an essential preliminary to the saving of the soul: for excessive poverty and suffering, taking the world as we find it, interfere with all religious duty.[1]

Once again, the social obstacle may be sheer poverty not due in any marked degree to drink. In how many districts do we not find a stratum of the population several hundreds of feet below all the rest—a stratum

[1] *Retreat*, p. 318.

which on inquiry turns out to be Catholic. It might better be called an unorganised parasitic growth. Much money has been spent on it in the way of relief —the result being that it grows in size without improving in character. Its tendency is to fill prisons and reformatories rather than churches. It shifts and floats, and the priest can make little impression on it by appeals to religious motives. His first contact with it fills him with dismay. Time does not dull his sense of pity, but it increases his feeling of helplessness. He comes to accept the slum as inevitable: the people cannot be mended, and he must just pick up the pieces as best he can. The routine of parish work with the constant need of raising money for church and schools fills his day and absorbs his activities: thoughts of social reorganisation, of constructive social effort, may flit across his brain, but they are soon crowded out by the present realities. Meanwhile, the problem assumes ever more disheartening proportions.

Yet here again the spiritual problem is conditioned by the social problem. The heroic work of our priests is thwarted by the demoralisation and degradation which are not being dealt with at their roots. Given certain conditions (presently to be specified), "the co-operation of the clergy in the works of Catholic action," says Pius X., "has a deeply religious end:[1] it will never become a hindrance, but will be a help to their spiritual ministry by enlarging its sphere and multiplying its fruits". That sphere is becoming alarmingly contracted by social pressure. The clergy in many lands are learning to widen it by judicious social action under the guidance of their Bishops.

Elsewhere the social obstacle may take the form

[1] See *Pope Pius X. on Social Reform*, C.S.G. Pamphlets, No. 4. C.T.S. 1d.

not of material degradation, but of mental prepossession. Again there is leakage—but it is to the unsupernatural rather than to the bestial. The men who go have self-respect — or rather self-complacency. They are leading clean lives. They are just the men—young, active, bright—whom one would wish to keep. Their energy might be turned to the best account—and their corners rubbed off by degrees. St. John declared that he wrote to the young men because they were strong. He did not wish their strength to be wasted or misspent. But misspent their strength too often is. Blind to the splendid opportunities furnished by the Catholic faith, they find other outlets for their restless and somewhat cock-sure energy. Their enthusiasms are spent on crazy theories or evaporate into dull indifference.

Again a social avenue might be found—an approach to the sanctuary by means of a generous comradeship in activities which would be a form of practical Catholicism. It is not enough to preach to the young man: he must be given something to do. He will soon discover the supernatural implications of his task and learn to seek for strength in it at the altar.

Once more, the labouring classes and the poor, who are keenly interested in the various projects which are being advanced for their material betterment, will be the more ready to seek close intercourse with their clergy if the clergy are known to have a deep and practical sympathy with movements for social reform. Enormous numbers of young Catholic workmen on the Continent have hitherto drifted out of touch with their priests because the latter have not shown themselves interested in the material betterment of the people. On the other hand (as will presently appear), those priests who have concerned themselves with measures of social reform have been able to bring

back multitudes of working men to the practice of their religion.

(iii) The third reason which is alleged for the participation of the Catholic clergy in social work is that Christian charity in these days demands it.

In other words, priests are called upon to interest themselves in social work, not merely because such work is a necessary condition of spiritual improvement, but also because such work is directly enjoined on them by the command of Christ that we should love our neighbour as ourselves for God's sake. Just as the clergy have ever been prominent in works of charity (in the narrower sense of the term), so in these days they need to be prominent in the promoting of social justice. The evils of modern society cannot be met by charitable endeavour alone. True, there will always be room for such endeavour, and the motive of Catholic charity needs to be vindicated in these days when men look to the State for the cure of all their distresses. But on the other hand, social justice must be promoted no less than charity, and in this work the Catholic clergy may be expected to take a leading part. In the present dislocation of society it is particularly necessary that priests, by exhortation and action, should strive to relieve suffering by insisting on social duties and responsibilities. The very same spirit which led them to work in the days of old for the liberation of captives, should lead them to work for the liberation of modern captives who are shackled by the chains imposed on them by economic injustice.

Whatever may be thought of the participation of the clergy in party politics (and the question need not be raised here), it is evident that their participation in movements of social reform which transcend party politics is likely to be more lasting in its effects, more

solid, and more sincere. There is no danger here of their alienating themselves from the sympathies of a portion of their flock. And whereas political activity must necessarily be intermittent, social activity calls for a steady and continuous effort. The former may be counteracted by intrigue, wire-pulling, and the incessant shifting of party policy. The latter is a slow and ever progressive building-up which, in the case of Catholic social work, rests upon an assured foundation. No shifting of policy can necessitate the cessation of efforts made to secure decent housing, a minimum wage, temperance, thrift, and the like. And social work lends itself easily to spiritualisation. It is itself a school of Christian virtues. It touches revealed religion at a thousand points besides cultivating in those who are occupied in it the moral virtues upon which civilisation is based.

Père Leroy, in eloquent pages which deserve careful study, makes it plain that the participation of the clergy in social work, so far from prejudicing sacerdotal dignity, is calculated to set the priest's spiritual functions in the highest relief. He lays particular stress upon what may be called the spiritual aspect of social work, the aspect with which the priest is particularly asked to concern himself. How far the clergy should occupy themselves with the purely material side of social activity will largely depend, he points out, upon circumstances of place and time. A priest in France will naturally show more reserve in this matter than a priest in Germany or Belgium. In any case no one will expect a priest to become a banker, a leader of industry, or a notary. But by speech and writing and some measure of direct action he may well take part in movements for the public well-being of which the purely material direction is in the hands of laymen. For these movements are, as

has been said, intimately connected with religious amelioration.

The situation is summed up (so far as the French clergy are concerned) by Père Leroy in the following words :—

> It will be said that there is danger of abuses here. I do not deny it; but where is there not danger of abuse? . . . It would be unjust, speaking generally, to accuse the French clergy of leaving their sacristies too often; it would be more just to blame them for remaining there. If we compare their sins of commission with their sins of omission, the latter very considerably exceed the former. The Catholic people have been despoiled of their rights and deceived in their need, not because their clergy have gone too far but because they have not gone far enough.
>
> Cæsarean or royalist maxims, Jansenistic theology, Gallican traditions, pharisaic liberalism, a groundless fear of public opinion, and a touchy sensitiveness to that opinion —all these causes have produced the same result. They have brought about a kind of depression in the souls of our priests, from which arises their excessive timidity. One would often be tempted to say that they are banished from those among whom they live, that they are excluded from the light, air, and life shared by other citizens. The man who can speak to most advantage is reduced to silence; the man whose work is most necessary is condemned to inactivity.
>
> Must we wait for a more serious peril before we break through this narrow circle? Has not the moment arrived for doing, with tranquil confidence, all the good that is in our power?

It may readily be allowed that the bulk of the social work which is waiting to be done must fall upon the laity. But it would seem clear from the injunctions of Popes and Bishops that the clergy must take the lead in promoting social activity. It is theirs to encourage co-operation, to secure the personal service

of Catholics of various classes, to explain the urgency of the need, to set forth the motives, to insist upon the principles. The task involves endless patience and rare tact. It is so much more satisfactory to do the work oneself than to get it done by a committee. Ghosts of unsuccessful experiments and visions of impossible collaborators are apt to deter us from inviting aid. Yet the field is so enormous that a host of labourers must be trained to work in it; and to train a group of labourers will give better results than single-handed toil, however heroic.

That the priest is called upon to take a leading part in the provision of elementary education for Catholic children has become generally recognised. Such work is accepted as a necessary department of parochial duty. It is work for souls. "Help me to build a school," says Father So-and-so, without any fear of being thought unpriestly. In the interval between administering the sacraments he wrestles with the conundrums set by the educational authorities. It is all, so to say, "in the shilling".

But surely the very same reasons which compel a priest to busy himself about primary education should compel him to busy himself with the education of the adolescent and the adult. Indeed if the second be not attended to the first will be in great measure fruitless. How many of the boys and girls in our primary schools are going to remain practising Catholics? From all sides comes the same appalling story. Great numbers drift away. During the first years which elapse after leaving school—a period when they are particularly in need of a Catholic social atmosphere—they are in large measure left to their own devices. They lose the way to the confessional and the altar-rails. Pulpit eloquence will not reclaim them, for its echoes do not reach the street.

Father Gabriel Paláu, in a striking pamphlet addressed to the clergy[1] has brought out into strong relief the need of social action on the part of the priest. He says, equivalently, that had the priests in the Middle Ages shut themselves up in their churches we should still be eating acorns. He also reminds us of the tendency of secularist governments to display anxious concern lest the priest should forget his high spiritual mission and emerge from the sacristy. He tells us that the words of Pope Leo XIII., "Go to the people," imply the abandonment of antiquated tactics, the relinquishing of peaceful routine, the coming out of a rut. As the Apostles went out of Jerusalem to conquer the world so that their enemies became "afraid of the people," in like manner the priest must go about doing good to souls and bodies, winning the confidence of the people. What more effective way of winning their confidence than by showing an interest in what interests them most?

That the clergy have the power of "directing the aspirations of economic democracy" to any signal extent may sound a bold proposition. But in the course of this book we shall see them actually doing it. Nor should this surprise us if we bear in mind the enormous advantages offered by unique organisation, long training, inspiring traditions, and high motives. The priest does not stand alone. He is a member of an admirably disciplined army spread over the whole world. He is conscious of wielding a power which is from God. He holds his commission from the Vicar of Christ.

[1] *La Acción social del Sacerdote*, published by the Acción Social Popular, Barcelona. See also *Le Clergé et la Question sociale*, by Dr. J. Scheicher, translated by C. Morel (Brussels Société Belge de Librairie, 1897); Abbé Lefebvre, *Organisation et Action populaire Chrêtienne* (Saint-Etienne, Hénaff, 1904); *Prêtres de France* (Rheims, Action Populaire); Radini-Tedeschi, *La Mission sociale du Prêtre* (Paris: Bonne Presse).

He has the key of the human heart—the primary instrument of social effectiveness. His close and sympathetic contact with those under his charge gives him a knowledge of their circumstances, their dispositions, and their real wants which is impossible to the lay student. His word carries weight. He is the best mediator, for he is known to be disinterested. In these days of rash enterprises and frauds and partisanship the people turn with confidence to the priest, for he, at least, has no axe to grind. And when it is a question of inspiring men with a generous zeal for social work, who can do it so effectively as the priest? He, too, is the best guarantee of the stability of such work: for he remains at his post when lay workers drop out or become taken up by necessary business or grow discouraged. He is less likely to flag than they, for he has the special graces of his calling, and moreover he is buoyed up by a glorious tradition of social service rendered to man through many centuries.

The influence wielded by priests in this country has often been remarked by candid observers. Mr. Charles Booth speaks of it as "much greater than that of the clergy or ministers of any Protestant community". Such influence, if extended to well-organised Catholic social action, could not fail to produce results quite out of proportion to our numbers.

It would be easy to multiply passages in which writers by no means friendly to Catholicism have dwelt on the enormous advantages which a priest possesses in the sphere of social action. M. Varlez in his book on *Les Associations rurales en Belgique* (a matter in regard to which he is recognised as a leading expert) has put the matter admirably well:—

The merit of having organised these forces belongs in the first place to the clergy. None but they were compe-

tent to determine instantaneously a movement of this nature. The priest is free from the trammels of domestic cares; he is intimately acquainted with every one of his parishioners; by his profession he is called upon to devote his energies, and he devotes them unstintingly, to the welfare of his flock; the action which he exercises, characterised by its singleness of purpose and uninterruptedness, and continued through the ages, is directed to the securing of peace and concord in the faithful; he invariably possesses at least the minimum of general information, without which the creation of social works becomes an impossibility; he is ever ready to march when the command is issued from higher authorities.

The above motives for social action on the part of the priest apply in the main to secular and regular alike. Both have been encouraged by the Holy See to undertake it. Both are needed. Experience shows that where they cordially co-operate—*honore invicem praevenientes*—in the field of social action they constitute a beneficent social force of marvellous range and effectiveness. The various Orders and Congregations, each with its spirit and traditions, its special opportunities and training, combined with the army of secular clergy, supplement one another and together supply the manifold contributions to social well-being which Catholicism alone can offer.

It has sometimes been said that the regular clergy are not suited to social work. Their constitutions have not sufficient suppleness and elasticity to allow of their taking part in it. Their founders have given them a definite task—preaching or teaching or giving missions—and their rules will not permit of their doing anything else.

Père Leroy has fully considered these objections in two articles contributed to *La Démocratie Chrétienne*,[1]

[1] June and July, 1904.

on the rôle of Religious in the social apostolate. He has no difficulty in proving from history the flexibility of religious Orders in the past, and the manner in which they accommodated themselves to every variety of social need. Coming to modern times he shows that Orders and Congregations of every type are summoned by the voice of the Holy See and by the needs of the Church to take part in the general social mission of the clergy, and that their doing so involves no departure from the spirit of their rule.

We may here remind ourselves that not only the active but also the contemplative Orders have a social mission.

This is a truth to which the average English non-Catholic is singularly impenetrable. He appreciates (unless he is a bigot) the Religious who nurse the sick and relieve the poor. He understands the teaching Orders who help to educate citizens. But he cannot see a glimpse of meaning in the life of the Carthusian or the Trappist. If he is himself a social worker his inability to understand them becomes accentuated into a kind of rage. "These men are anti-social," he exclaims. "How can they have the heart to shut themselves up in solitude when the world is so full of destitution and misery? They have run away from the battle like cowards. They have betrayed humanity."

Every instructed Catholic will be ready with his *apologia* for the contemplative Orders on purely supernatural grounds. These men and women send up to God a stream of unceasing prayer and keep themselves free, for God's sake, from the smoke of the world. But (because it is, *in comparison*, unimportant) we do not always remember what a convincing defence of Carthusian and Trappist can be made on merely natural or, so to say, "carnal" grounds.

It is, in fact, easy to show that, here as elsewhere, "*pietas ad omnia utilis est*," and that all service of God inevitably works out into the well-being of man even in this world.

The matter is worth dwelling on for a moment because it increases our own insight into the function of religious Orders in the Church, and because it helps us to draw under Catholic influences those who, amid unselfish social work, are often unconsciously groping for the very ideals which the religious Orders embody.

In the first place, then, contemplative houses are sanctuaries whither a tired and fevered world may repair, though but occasionally, to refresh itself with the sight of the calm and radiantly happy men and women who have found what many deny to be possible in this world—an absolutely serene and contented life.

These institutions are, in fact, a standing protest against certain features of our modern life which have called forth emphatic warnings from thoughtful men like the late Prof. William James. That distinguished psychologist has denounced with convincing eloquence what he calls the "bottled-lightning" type of mind with which we are becoming increasingly familiar—the over-excited, over-intense mental life which so many lead, with the result that "the sultry, threatening, exhausting, thunderous inner atmosphere never quite clears away". All this, he tells us, indicates not strength but weakness; and he recommends a deliberate attempt to cultivate just that freedom of mind and "power through repose" and equanimity which are, in fact, fostered by the contemplative Orders in the Church. Prof. James quotes with approval from the charming work on *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence, a Carmelite friar. "The

simple-heartedness of the good Brother," he concludes, "and the relaxation of all unnecessary solicitudes and anxieties in him is a refreshing spectacle."[1] Here then is at least one social function of enclosed religious Orders, *viz.* the providing of a "refreshing spectacle" in a world of over-wrought and jaded souls.

More good can be done to Society by a few men steeped and saturated in the eternal truths than by a crowd of superficial busybodies. The truly unsocial man is he who lets his character evaporate in noisy bustle, in empty activity, in self-seeking. But the man who in silence and solitude stores up in his heart a great reservoir of power will irrigate the world. Just as a retreat is worth a host of committees and conferences to us all, so the existence in our midst of a few men and women vowed to the highest life, exercises a more powerful influence on the social organism than a multitude of mere talkers and uninspired workers. The idealism of the few will raise the tone of the whole community. This has ever been recognised by the founders of religious Orders who take care to impress upon their subjects that if they are not helping the world by their solitude they had better return to it.

More than this: the contemplative Orders in exceptional circumstances when the need has been pressing, have come out of their enclosures and girded themselves for active work:—

> When the scarcity of priests or the need of the times has required it, we have seen legions of apostles coming out from their cloisters, men eminent for sanctity and learning, who have valiantly come to the aid of the Bishops and produced the most beneficent social results, quelling discord, banishing hatred, bringing people back to the notion of

[1] *Talks to Teachers.*

duty and re-establishing in their place of honour the principles of religion and of Christian civilisation.[1]

As for the active Orders, European civilisation owes them a debt which can scarcely be reckoned. Their rules, instead of being a hindrance to social action, adapt them for it in quite an extraordinary fashion. We are not surprised to find a French Bishop (Mgr. Delamaire) turning naturally to the dispersed Religious for aid in the pressing work of social organisation. Let them, he says, go among the people and start a campaign of Christian social education, lecturing wherever they can, in assembly rooms or barns. Let them be soldiers, pioneers, teachers in the good cause. They have the knowledge and the experience, they are well trained and zealous, and their prestige will win them a hearing. "Let them come forward: I promise them great and consoling success." Among the subjects on which they are to discourse, the Bishop mentions agriculture, rural banks, and co-operative societies. He tells them not to be astonished at the new task to which they are invited: after all, foreign missionaries make use of similar methods to Christianise a people.

Indeed, as Père Leroy points out in the articles above referred to, social action on the part of Religious is no departure from tradition but a return to it. Such action will best be inspired by recalling the past. Especially suitable to religious bodies is the task of social education—the study and application of Catholic social principles, researches in economic and social history, the providing of popular social literature, the giving of lectures, the formation of study circles. On the Continent many young Religious are being put aside by their superiors for systematic social study in Universities and elsewhere.

[1] Leo XIII. to Cardinal Richard (23rd December, 1900).

There is practical work, too, in abundance. Agricultural questions, for instance, are to the fore, and there would seem to be special scope for the activity of religious bodies in this department of social work. Tradition points to it, and experience shows that Religious can meet certain needs of country life with unrivalled success. Mgr. Benson has sketched for us[1] the model village colony which might come into being under the inspiration of a religious Order.

In connection with certain natural hesitations which may arise concerning the suitability of social work for members of religious Orders, we may recall the career of Fr. Vicent, the pioneer of the remarkable social movement in Spain. Fr. Vicent was told by Pope Leo XIII. in the course of an audience, that he must continue his social activity as long as he lived.

"I will do so, Holy Father, if my Superiors allow me," was the answer of the dutiful Religious.

"*I* am your Superior," said the Pope with emphasis. "Go on with this great work till you die."

Fr. Vicent's work proceeded without interruption till his lamented death two years ago.

[1] See *The Housing Problem*, edited by Leslie Toke and published by the Catholic Social Guild, 1 Victoria Street, London.

CHAPTER IV.

GERMANY.

In the last chapter we considered some of the arguments which are commonly employed in favour of social work on the part of the clergy. We saw that the Holy See and the Bishops are warmly encouraging such work, and that the clergy are urged to take part in it in order that they may increase their spiritual influence among the people and at the same time fulfil a duty of Christian charity.

But what, as a matter of fact, are the clergy doing in the way of social work? How do they, in practice, tackle the problem, and with what effect? Have the results really been worth all the trouble? Has the priestly spirit suffered in the process, or has it on the contrary, gained in intensity? Does such work on the part of the clergy make their parishioners better Christians, or does it rather diminish their esteem of the supernatural by focussing their attention on material improvement? Has the priest mended matters by coming out of the sacristy, or would it have been better if he had stopped there?

Nothing like a complete account of the social work of the clergy, even in a single country, can be given here. But it may be useful to select a few typical instances of such work from various quarters. It is not for a moment suggested that precisely similar work could be undertaken by priests in this country.

In most cases, not only are our clergy already overburdened with parochial duties, but the economic and social circumstances abroad are so different to our own, that foreign methods cannot be imported as they stand. Nevertheless, the study of what is actually being done with episcopal approbation abroad, may suggest methods of fostering the Christian spirit among the people at home. It may let us see how, with social changes, the priest may find fresh methods of bringing to bear upon society the beneficent influence of Catholic principles.

We may begin with Germany.

I. Social Work of the Clergy Before Adolf Kolping.

Visitors to Germany will not fail to be struck by the active part which the Catholic clergy take in social movements. The extent to which they identify themselves with all that concerns the temporal welfare of the people is probably without parallel in other lands. The life of the German priest is intimately bound up with that of his flock.

But this has not always been the case. The Counter-Reformation and the great war of the seventeenth century left the Catholic Church exhausted. Protestantism invaded public life and monopolised public offices. The priests were driven back into their churches and their influence became confined to merely spiritual ministrations. The Catholic laity, too, were excluded from any leading part in the intellectual and material development of the country. The North, which had largely become Protestant, drew its inspiration from Prussia and Saxony and caught the prevailing enthusiasm for the new scientific methods. The eighteenth century was marked in

this part of Germany by an intense intellectual movement which resolutely set its face against all Catholic influence. And while the Catholics of the North were excluded from the new movement, those of the South were disinclined to take any part in it. They remained apathetic and untouched by national aspirations.

In the eighteenth century ecclesiastics did not concern themselves with social organisation, and we, to-day, might be tempted to think their action "unsocial": yet we must remember that social action on their part was, in those times impossible.

Provision for the material welfare of the people, was, indeed, highly organised during the "Enlightenment" of the eighteenth century: but it was entirely bureaucratic. The "State" was all in all: the individual was cared for merely because he was a citizen, and there was no room for private enterprise in social action. The spirit of Josephinism hindered all voluntary association.

With the nineteenth century came a great revival in German life, and Romanticism led to a new interest in Catholic traditions and ideas. But even then the time had not yet come for Catholic social action properly so called. Absolutism still prevailed. Christian charity had first to prepare the soil by such unostentatious work as circumstances permitted. The undertaking of this work was largely due to the influence of the great movement started in France by Frederick Ozanam and by the growing activity of the religious Orders. Not even then did the clergy take an active part in social work: although a revolutionary propaganda was being pushed forward assiduously and the Catholic people were in sore need of the guidance and support of their priests, the clergy remained in somewhat inglorious seclusion. But in

the 'thirties and 'forties came widespread famine and distress, and these did something to bring together priests and people in charitable endeavour.

At the same time some of the leading laymen were promoting a Catholic political movement and bringing it to the notice of the people, while, on the other hand, a group of theologians at Strasburg and Mainz were making a scientific study of parish organisation and bringing their results to the notice of the parish clergy, who, as we know, had sadly neglected their duties.

As a result, a number of Catholic political clubs were founded, the *Piusverein* established, and, towards the end of the forties, the Catholic Association of Germany came into being, holding its first General Congress at Mainz in 1848. This may be called the dawn of the new era. The people insisted that the priests should act as leaders of these new associations, and the clergy at last came forward as a body.

And now came another event which did much to bring about a still closer understanding between priests and people, namely, the crisis in the condition of the workers in the various handicrafts.

The "liberal" idea of freedom of contract and the destruction of the last vestiges of organisation among the workers at the beginning of the century had resulted in complete disorder and fierce competition. Instead of the old family traditions between master and man there grew up a system in which the bulk of the people formed a proletariat, unstable alike in morals and citizenship. Famine, distress, and the Radical propaganda completed the ruin.

It was amid such surroundings that Adolf Kolping, a Rhenish shoemaker's apprentice, spent his youth. His longings for a higher education met with great difficulties: but he overcame all obstacles and was

enabled to pursue the study of theology at the University of Munich. There he became acquainted with Görres, Phillips, and Jörg, all of them men of generous ideals with a capacity for inspiring others. But still more important was his friendship with Baron W. E. von Ketteler, at that time a student of theology at the same University and afterwards Bishop of Mainz. They exchanged ideas on the subject of associations for young workmen, Kolping hoping to restore the Guilds of the Middle Ages, Ketteler preferring less rigid organisations which might be more in accordance with modern needs. Kolping ultimately adopted Ketteler's ideas. After his ordination in 1845, as parish priest at Elberfeld, he took up an association for young men of the middle and lower classes and transformed it into a regular Journeymen's Union, which soon spread over the whole of Germany. At the head of the various branches were the parish priests whom Kolping trained for the work by voice and pen. This movement did more than anything else to weld clergy and laity together and formed the basis of social action among the clergy of Germany.

The *Gesellenverein* offers to young artisans all the advantages of a Christian family, demanding from them in return, and helping them to maintain, a high standard of Christian life. It saves them from the two perils of isolation and bad companionship by surrounding them with opportunities for healthy recreation, aiding them to cultivate their minds, and providing them with inexpensive lodgings free from the dangers which beset the young man plunged in the vortex of city life.

Everywhere in Germany we find the hospice of the *Gesellenverein*, which is a real home for the young artisans. There, in the evenings after work is over, they organise games, frequent reading-rooms and

lectures, and take part in concerts and dramatic entertainments; and when the Sunday comes they are helped to sanctify it and make it a day of recreation for soul and body alike. An artisan who leaves one town for another finds a home waiting for him. The work is organised on a diocesan basis, the various *Vereine* of each diocese being under the direction of a diocesan president. At the head of each *Verein* is a priest (usually from a neighbouring parish church) appointed by the bishop. He has supreme control and is in charge of the spiritual and temporal interests of his adopted family.

Membership of the *Gesellenverein* is restricted to unmarried artisans between the ages of seventeen and twenty-seven. But the clergy of Germany have founded similar associations both for the young apprentices and for master-craftsmen. Thus the lads are trained up to become worthy members of the great guild of artisans; and the successful men who have achieved independence and set up for themselves are kept in touch with those who are still employees. All form one immense family of nearly a quarter of a million men: and this great organisation which has done so much to raise the material and moral condition of a large section of the skilled workers of Germany, was founded by a priest and is maintained by priests at its present high level of efficiency.

This work of the German clergy for the benefit of artisans is an interesting revival of the spirit which created the old Catholic Guilds, and it has done incalculable service in raising the material and moral condition of a large section of the working classes in Germany.

The young artisan among ourselves has commonly to fight for his Catholic faith as best he can. His material interests may be secured to some extent by

a Labour Union: but such an organisation is far from giving him that moral training which he needs. It has little influence on his character and none at all on his religion, save possibly the bad influence which comes from consorting with those for whom religion has no meaning. In the old days of the Guilds it was different. The young craftsman was protected from his worst enemies. Finding a home in the family of his employer he also found, not only a career but a religious atmosphere and a company of brethren in the Guild to which he belonged.

But the Guild is gone and society is pulverised into warring atoms, grouped only by material interests. The Catholic Church alone can bring order out of this chaos: and this in many countries she is doing with more or less success according to her opportunities. Modern individualism has torn up the artisan by the roots: he must be replanted and in a congenial soil. This is the task which confronts politicians and economists in Germany as elsewhere. They have devised palliatives: they have sought to give the craftsman a status. But in so far as the work has been done, it has been done not by them but by the Catholic priests.

II. Bishop Ketteler and the Labour Movement.

Besides the organisation of the journeymen there took place in the 'sixties the beginnings of a movement among the workmen in general. Ketteler, now Bishop of Mainz, took a warm interest in this new enterprise of the "Christian Social Unions," which he promoted by his writings, his discourses in the Cathedral, and his speeches at the Catholic Congresses.[1]

[1] See Albert Franz, *Geschichte der sozialen Bewegung im deutschen Catholicismus bis Bischof von Ketteler* (M. Gladbach); Metlake, *Christian Social Reform* (Washbourne); Goyau, *Ketteler* (Paris: Bloud).

The Christian labour movement was considerably hindered by the *Kulturkampf* and by the laws directed against the socialists. But at the Catholic Congress at Amberg in 1884, when these obstacles had been removed, Fr. Franz Hitze, that distinguished pioneer of social reform, took up once more the cause of the workmen. He carried a resolution recommending the establishment of workmen's union "as the most efficacious means of checking the modern current of impiety and corruption". These unions were to be in charge of the priests, aided in each case by a committee and a group of honorary members. Separate unions were, as far as possible, to be established for those under eighteen years of age.

The aims of the new association were stated as follows:—

1. To protect the religious sentiment and the morality of the workers.

2. To cultivate in them the virtues proper to their state of life, *viz.* love of work, sobriety, thrift, and the family spirit.

3. To foster a true spirit of friendship among them and to encourage elevating amusements.

4. To further the intellectual education and the technical knowledge of the worker.

The means to be employed were frequentation of the Sacraments, religious conferences, libraries and reading-rooms, organised recreations, the establishment of saving banks, and the like.

These statutes were drawn up by Fr. Hitze, who has been to this movement what Fr. Kolping was to the *Gesellenverein.* The work was warmly encouraged by the Bishops and taken up with enthusiasm by the priests all over the country.

It was no easy task. To deal with large numbers of working men of whom many have never had the

advantage of a good home training, and most are exposed to all the seductions of vice in their daily work, requires very considerable tact. If the priest shows any want of firmness and vigilance moral evils will show themselves in the association and spread like a plague; on the other hand, if the association is made excessively pious it would be given a wide berth by the very men who most need religious influence. An organisation of this kind is not like a Sodality which addresses itself to a picked few, an élite of already zealous men; it must cater for the workman in general with all his peculiarities and shortcomings.

Now the clergy of Germany appear, as a body, to have solved this most difficult problem and to have won the entire confidence not of a few special men but of the large groups with whom they have to deal. They have taken the line of throwing themselves sympathetically into the daily life of the workman, of taking a detailed interest in his concerns, and sharing his amusements to a degree which may cause surprise to those who are accustomed to a greater aloofness in the clergy. The results appear to have been eminently satisfactory: though it is not suggested that the clergy in every other country would do well to imitate such familiarity in detail. Much depends upon national conditions, social circumstances, temperament, and the like. A German priest may, without unseemliness, sit among a gathering of laymen with his tankard of beer before him and his pipe in his mouth. A similar sight among ourselves might cause perplexity to the faithful.

The federation of these workmen's unions was first effected in North Germany in 1891; the various labour unions of South Germany were also united in one federation. In the course of the same year appeared the famous Encyclical of Leo XIII., *Rerum Novarum*, which enjoined upon the clergy a special solicitude for

the working classes. Thereupon there were formed in West Germany, first of all diocesan federations and subsequently a general union of workers' associations. Later came the East German federations and, again in North Germany, the Berlin Union. In 1911, owing to the indefatigable efforts of the veteran Fr. Hitze, the various federations of West, East, and South Germany were united.

These unions include employees both in industry and commerce. They seek to form healthy members of society, good citizens, and thorough Christians. They frankly recognise the need of basing social action on religious belief; and since they realise the importance of cultivating a high standard of family life among the workers, they have also made provision for the organisation of working women.

During the last ten years the proposals put forward by Fr. Hitze in the 'eighties have been carried out, and special unions for working women have been organised. This movement, too, is under the direction of the parish priests who have established hospices where women may obtain board, lodging, and recreation. A few years ago there were fifty or sixty of these hospices in existence, some of them sufficient to accommodate several hundreds of women. Domestic economy centres are often connected with these hospices, and in various ways the Catholic working woman is given a social and religious formation which will enable her to face the difficulties of modern industrial life.

To Fr. Hitze again is largely due the foundation in 1880 of the great industrial association known as the *Arbeiterwohl* or "Worker's Welfare". This body concerns itself with the *practical* side of the social question, and in particular with the normal conditions of the industrial worker.[1] It promotes the formation

[1] *Kannengieser*, p. 210 ff.

of various associations for the benefit of the working classes, establishes savings banks, promotes hygienic conditions in factories and workshops, ensures the separation of the sexes at work, encourages the provision of suitable housing for the worker and of domestic economy classes, furthers sound labour legislation, and so forth. This society brings together representatives of the State, of the employers, and of the worker, and the influence of the clergy in promoting a common understanding is incalculable. The *Arbeiterwohl*, which has a monthly organ bearing its name, and which has, moreover, published a large quantity of popular social literature, has from the beginning accomplished a great deal of practical work and has done much to improve the material and moral condition of industrial workers in Germany.

An important movement, initiated by Fr. Karl Sonnenschein, deserves special mention: university students take part in assisting the continuation studies of working men. Would that educated Catholics in England realised the importance of such work as this!

The clergy have also taken a more or less prominent part in another of the great social organisations which have contributed to German prosperity, namely, the Christian Agricultural League (*christliche Bauernvereine*), founded by Baron von Schorlemer Alst, and now spread all over Germany. It does much to protect the property of the farmers and to consolidate Christian family life.

The *Bauernverein* of Trêves was the creation of the famous Fr. Dasbach, the founder of half a dozen successful Catholic newspapers, and the terror of Jewish usurers, whose iniquities he laid bare in his powerful book on the subject. His Union, founded in 1884, was designed to rescue the peasant from the clutches of the money-lender, and speedily secured the support

of the local clergy. In a short time the *Verein* numbered 12,000 members. A series of lawsuits were instituted against the usurers with considerable success. Moreover, an agricultural bank was founded, and thousands of head of cattle were distributed among the peasants on terms that admitted of easy repayment. A Live Stock Insurance Society made the position of the proprietor still more secure.

As is well known, Raiffeisen Banks have received considerable support from the clergy in various parts of Germany. It need not be pointed out how these institutions lend themselves in a special degree, not only to the economic regeneration of country districts, but also to the increase of social solidarity and the raising of the moral standard. In particular they offer to the parish priest opportunities of intimate and friendly intercourse with those of his flock who might otherwise prove inaccessible. German parish priests have taken a leading part in the organisation of these banks; in Alsace in the course of a few years they founded no less than 104 with a membership of over 10,000.

Of more recent years the tendency to organisation has spread to the middle classes. The Catholic merchants were the first to form a federation which now counts its members by tens of thousands. Priests are appointed by the Bishops to serve as advisors both to the local branches and to the central body.

Other examples might be given of the prominent part played by the clergy in the formation and direction of various organisations—societies for servant maids, shop girls, female clerks, etc., under the immediate care of nuns or of the *Frauenbund*. In addition to this the priests have, of course, their official duties in connection with the primary schools, of which, in Prussia, they are the Government inspectors.

III. The Clergy in the Volksverein and Social Action in the Parishes.

The *Volksverein* or popular union for Catholic Germany was founded by Windthorst in 1890. Its members now number nearly 800,000 men of all classes, and it constitutes the most remarkable organ of social education in the world. By the circulation of an enormous amount of literature, and by meetings and lectures it has trained the Catholics of Germany to their present high state of social efficiency, defended their religious interests, and advanced the general cause of social reform.

Now the clergy are the backbone of the *Volksverein.* At the head we find three distinguished priests, Dr. August Pieper, Dr. Wilhelm Hohn, and Dr. H. Brauns. Other priests are on the editorial staff. The presidents of the 6500 local branches are priests. All this is the guarantee of adherence to Catholic principles and the secret of the extraordinary influence which the *Volksverein* possesses among the people. The effects upon parish life are very striking.[1]

An example may serve to illustrate the systematic manner in which the German priest works. A serious obstacle to social as well as religious organisation in many large towns is the fluctuating character of the population. This difficulty has been met in a most effective fashion by the German clergy. The method, first introduced in Dortmund, has been widely imitated. This consists of having a central bureau in the town controlled by the senior Rector and a curate from each of the other churches. A priest, appointed by the Bishop, with two assistants have charge of a card catalogue on which are inscribed the names of

[1] See the shilling booklet *Der Volksverein* published in French at M. Gladbach.

all the Catholics in the town. Arrivals and departures are notified to this bureau by the public authorities. Correspondence is maintained with the priests of other parishes. On each card are entered various details concerning the family—mixed marriages, Easter duties, clubs frequented by the husband, newspapers subscribed to, and so forth. The cards are arranged according to streets and are constantly revised. The same bureau also has charge of the weekly parish magazine, which is distributed gratis, the cost being covered by advertisements. A special edition is issued for each parish, the bulk of the text being in common.

Other functions of the bureau are co-operation with the charity federation of the town, and Catholic defence. The latter point is worth noting. Every movement of the enemies of the Church is keenly watched and vigorously counteracted.

The charity federation, just mentioned, which exists in every large town, groups together the various charitable societies, co-ordinates their efforts and prevents overlapping. Here, too, we find the clergy acting as directors.

Finally, we may mention the numerous parish newspapers which are generally edited by priests.

IV. The Social Training of the Clergy.

The social action of the German clergy is not haphazard or isolated but systematic and concerted. It is by no means cold and inhuman, like the operations of a Government department; on the contrary, it is characterised by a homely directness and sympathy which is largely the secret of its power. Yet it is markedly thoughtful and scientific. In other words, it is based not merely on generous sentiment but on careful study.

The first impulse to systematic social study on the part of the clergy was given by Bishop Ketteler. The Bishops of Germany, at the famous Conference of Fulda in 1869, endorsed the following recommendations drawn up by the "great precursor" of Leo XIII.:—

The Church must awaken interest in the condition of the working classes, especially among the clergy. These are often little interested in the matter, because they are not convinced of the actual existence, magnitude, and pressing danger of social evils. They do not grasp the nature and extent of the social question, and they are entirely in the dark as to the method of helping towards a solution. The social question, therefore, must no longer be neglected in the training of the clergy in philosophy and pastoral theology. It is much to be desired that individual priests should be induced to take up the study of Political Economy, and should be furnished with travelling expenses in order that they may learn from personal observation . . . both the needs of the working classes and the institutions which help to meet them. . . . It would appear to be in the highest degree desirable that in each diocese, without further delay, one or more fit and proper persons, clerical or lay, should be appointed and commissioned to interest themselves in the labour question. They should compile statistics of the factories and workshops and of the operatives in their respective districts, and should inform themselves as to the physical, intellectual, moral and religious condition of those operatives, as well as of the institutions and organisations which have been set on foot in their districts for the well-being of the working classes and the improvement of their condition. A meeting of these diocesan deputies either for each State or for the whole of Germany should be arranged, at which each might report on his own diocese, and a general consultation be held as to ways and means of solving the labour question.

Thenceforth the clergy of Germany took to the study of social questions with considerable spirit. An

increasing amount of literature was published for their benefit, conferences were arranged, and lectures were delivered to theological students. The appearance of the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* led to still further activity; we find, for instance, the Bishop of Ratisbon dealing with it at length in a letter to his clergy the following Christmas. During the last twenty years the Bishops have sedulously encouraged the clergy to throw themselves into social study and action, and the parish priests as a body have followed the example of Ketteler and Kolping. Theoretical and practical social questions figure largely in Deanery Conferences, and a number of special study clubs for priests have been established. Many of the clergy attend the lectures at M. Gladbach, and the general level of social knowledge among them is remarkably high. They are led by such experts as the venerable Dr. Franz Hitze, who is a Professor at Münster, Dr. August Pieper of the *Volksverein*, Mgr. Franz Schweitzer, the President General of the *Gesellenverein*, and Mgr. Werthmann, the President of the Charity Federation.

The output of scientific social literature by the German clergy is enormous. Unfortunately it is little known to non-Catholic students in this country who have much to learn from it.

CHAPTER V.

FRANCE.

It is in France that the interest of the clergy in social work has produced the most voluminous literature, and is best known to English readers. The political events of the last few years have thrown the French clergy upon their own resources and made them look about for methods of recovering that influence with the working classes which they had to a large extent lost. The rupture of the Concordat by the French Government, though itself a flagrant act of injustice involving much hardship to the clergy, nevertheless offered a splendid opportunity for creating a real solidarity among the Catholics of France. As long as the clergy were public functionaries their influence with the people was restricted. Now they are given full scope for initiative, and are brought into closer relations with their flocks. True, the Government is quite aware of this result, and is making determined efforts to counteract the growing social influence of the clergy. But the latter are rapidly regaining the confidence of the working classes.

Many of our readers will be familiar with the charming series of books by Yves le Querdec (M. Georges Fonsegrive), the first and best known of which is entitled *Lettres d'un Curé de Campagne.*[1] They will

[1] Paris, Lecoffre.

remember the Curé's description of his appointment to the parish of St. Julien, in which he hopes to lead a peaceful life of quiet and consoling ministration to his flock, recreating himself in his library and garden and entertaining his fellow-priests from neighbouring parishes. But he reckons without his flock! The Bishop, indeed, warns him that to be a priest is to deny oneself and to be at the service of others. But it is not until he arrives at his parish that he realises to what an extent he must empty himself for others and renounce his idyllic expectations. Some of the women come to church, but the men are otherwise occupied. The Curé has to solve the problem of getting into touch with his parishioners. He is a missionary among aliens. He appreciates the value of some knowledge of husbandry, hygiene, medicine, and other subjects outside the seminary course. He sets to work to study them, and at last ventures on their application. He initiates various social works which make him indispensable and thaw all prejudice. He lures the Marquis from his *château* to take part in social reform. By degrees the church refills. The Curé's social authority develops into spiritual influence.

Much has happened in France since this delightful novel first appeared. It was originally regarded by some as quixotic. Others thought it dangerous. It has proved to be prophetic. It has been followed by a host of volumes describing very similar adventures on the part of country vicars who have re-Christianised whole parishes after getting into touch with the people by means of social work. Only these volumes are no longer fiction, but the record of actual fact. Their chief difference from M. le Querdec's book is that they sound vastly more improbable.

As a specimen we may turn to M. Max Turmann's

book, *Activités Sociales*,[1] and briefly summarise some of its pages.

The Abbé Gruson, parish priest of Fourmies, comes to the wise conclusion that one cannot tell whether a peasant is well off by merely ascertaining the amount of his wages. The cost of living has also to be taken into account. This is brought home to the good Abbé by a conversation with a working-man from Hautmont.

This man explained that he had previously been working at a place called Locquignol, in the forest of Mormal, where he earned only 30 sous a day. This sounds deplorable; but on being cross-examined by the priest he admitted that he had found lodging cheap at Locquignol, grown his own vegetables and grain, gathered his fuel in the forest; he even owned to fowls and hinted at a cow. But the 30 sous a day had rankled, and he had quitted the forest. Now he was getting 4 fr. 50 a day, but had to buy everything —fuel, vegetables, and the rest. He was convinced that he had bettered his position.

But the Abbé disillusioned him.

"So you have left Locquignol because you only earned 30 sous a day there, though you were provided with bread, vegetables, some of your meat, your eggs, milk, butter, and fuel. You have come to Hautmont to earn 4 fr. 50, and have to buy everything, even a leek for your soup. Tell me how much of your 4 fr. 50 is left when you have paid for everything that you did not have to buy at Locquignol?"

"Not very much."

"And if you fall ill, if you lose your employment, you will be absolutely destitute. In the country, at all events, if you fell ill for a few days, your land, your animals, and the forest would continue to produce for you."

[1] Lecoffre, 1906.

"That's true, is that! Maybe I've done a silly thing. I'll see if I can't get back to Locquignol."

"I think, my friend, that you couldn't do better."

However, since it was clearly impossible to send all towns-people back into the country, the Abbé set himself to consider how far the peculiar advantages of country life might be brought within reach of an industrial population. In his own parish of Fourmies he found an opportunity for experiment. On the one hand, many of his parishioners found it extremely hard to make both ends meet, and were quite incapable of tiding over a few days of unemployment; on the other, well, there was some excellent land just outside the town. The Curé bought a couple of acres cheap, and divided it the same day into twenty-eight lots. The next event may be told in his own words:—

Calling a labourer whom I knew, I said to him:—

"No doubt there are in your neighbourhood working-men who would like to have a little garden for nothing?"

"Certainly there are!"

"Well, pick out twenty-eight of them, preferably those who have large families, and bring them to me to-morrow."

The next day, a Sunday, at nine o'clock in the morning, twenty-eight working-men arrived at the presbytery, somewhat astonished at finding themselves in the house of the Curé, whom they scarcely knew.

Were the men practising Catholics or not? Were they Socialists or not? I did not put these questions to them, but simply said:—

"My friends, I know that you find it difficult to make a living. It is my duty to help you as far as I can, and I think that a garden would be very useful to you. May I make you a present of it? The garden is at your service."

The Curé saw that the look of pleasure on the men's faces was tempered by an expression of suspicion. They evidently anticipated that conditions would be

attached to the gift. They would have to go to Mass —or perhaps to vote at the municipal elections as the Curé told them. But the Curé's next speech made matters plain: it deserves to be quoted in full.

> My friends, I am giving you this garden on one condition only, namely, that you cultivate it as well as possible for the benefit of your families. My wish is that you should have all the vegetables a workman's family needs. . . . Must you go to Mass as a condition of keeping your garden? To go to Mass on Sundays is a grave obligation for Catholics. I am your Curé; I have to remind you of your obligation whenever I get the chance. If you follow my advice you will be right; if you do not you will be wrong. But in the latter case I will not deprive you of your garden: for whether you fulfil your religious obligations or not, you will always want vegetables.
>
> It may be said—it certainly *will* be said—that these gardens are an electioneering bribe. Be quite sure that people who talk like this completely misunderstand my intentions. In politics, as in religion, I respect your liberty. So please do not speak to me again about the coming elections, and you shall hear nothing about them from me.

The ice was broken, and the men went off to dig. More gardens were purchased by degrees, and when M. Turmann wrote they numbered 450 and supplied over 2000 people with vegetables. The Curé kept in touch with the work which, though not without its difficulties, flourished exceedingly. We need not follow their development, but we may notice two points on which the Abbé Gruson justly lays great stress.

1. It is no use giving gardens to townsfolk unless you show those townsfolk how to use them. Their one idea seems to be potatoes, and even these require some skilled attention.

2. When the men have learnt how to cultivate vegetables, their wives must be shown how to cook

them. An *école ménagère* is needed if the gardens are to be a success.

Here, as in so many cases, one form of social work leads to another. The priest who establishes one point of social contact speedily acquires several more.

Much has happened at Fourmies. A number of workmen are getting more fresh air than they used to, and tuberculosis is on the decrease. They are also getting vegetables for nothing, and unemployment is shorn of some of its terrors. Finally, the Curé, while helping the parishioners to plant their vegetables, has incidentally planted himself. He has taken root among his people and won their confidence and affection. The men are coming back to their Easter duties, and there is no evidence to show that the Curé, amid the attractions of gardening, either scamps his prayers or omits to prepare his sermons.

M. Turmann's second sketch is taken from a country parish not far from the capital. The name of the parish is not Saint-Acheul, but that will do as well as any other. It is not always wise to draw public attention to private initiative among Catholics in France.

Some eight or ten years ago, then, our Curé arrived at his new parish, bristling with enthusiasm.

He needed all his courage. Not a man at Sunday Mass, only a few women and children. The new arrival met with nothing but scowls or, at the best (or worst), indifference.

Clearly the people had to be approached on the side of their material interests—the only ones they had. The Curé spent quite a long time in studying the situation, examining local needs and circumstances, observing character. Despite his enthusiasm he was determined not to make a false start. He reviewed the situation at leisure, and set himself to discover what

the people wanted most, and by means of what social institution he could secure their confidence while promoting their temporal welfare.

The needful institution was discovered to be a rural bank. Our Curé forthwith mastered the workings of rural banks and prevailed upon some friends in a neighbouring town to advance the funds with which to start. He then indoctrinated half a dozen of the peasants with the new idea, and circulated pamphlets among the rest.

To start a rural bank and then leave it to work itself is a perfectly useless proceeding. Such a bank will only become an instrument of real social value to a district when the people are continually instructed in methods of employing it. Suggestions must constantly be made to them as to the kind of purposes for which the bank may profitably be used. The peasant, who has possibly suffered from the fangs of the usurer, is often nervous about borrowing from the bank. He needs to be encouraged and shown in detail how he may employ the loan with safety and profit. Hence the foundation of the bank was for the Curé the beginning of a close and daily intercourse with his people.

The bank was inevitably followed by a syndicate for the purchase and distribution of manures, agricultural implements, and so forth. Here again it was the Curé who took the initiative. There were checks and disappointments, no doubt; but the work progressed, for the Curé's enthusiasm was of the right sort. Meanwhile, the men were trickling back to the church.

The next move was a series of Thursday evening talks to young peasants (their ages ran from fourteen to twenty-seven) at the presbytery; not, as might have been expected, on Freemasonry or Darwinism, but on agricultural questions, experiments in manure, rural

institutions in Germany or Belgium. The Curé read them extracts bearing on these matters from magazines and newspapers, carefully collected for the purpose during the week. And here note his wisdom. He would not allow the young men to be mere listeners. They must work up a subject for themselves. He selected for them what may certainly be called a "live" subject—to wit, the Insurance of Live Stock. He set them to work, lending them books and pamphlets, and solving their difficulties. When the subject had been fairly thrashed out, all the farmers in the district were invited to a public conference, in which the young men set forth the advantages and described the methods of Live Stock Insurance. The elders smiled, and brought forward what they considered to be crushing objections. But the young men, with the subject at their finger-ends, disconcerted their worthy parents by solving all difficulties. Live Stock Insurance is now in general favour at Saint-Acheul.

The next design of the Curé was the multiplication of peasant proprietors. Systematic thrift and the assistance of the bank ultimately brought the coveted *lopin de terre* within reach of quite a number of agricultural labourers. The results were precisely those enumerated by Pope Leo XIII. in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*:—

> If working people can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land, the consequence will be that the gulf between vast wealth and sheer poverty will be bridged over, and the respective classes will be brought nearer to one another. A further consequence will result in the greater abundance of the fruits of the earth. Men always work harder and more readily when they work on that which belongs to them; nay, they learn to love the very soil that yields, in response to the labour of their hands, not only food to eat, but an abundance of good things for themselves and those that are dear to them.

That such a spirit of willing labour would add to the produce of the earth and to the wealth of the community is self-evident. And a third advantage would spring from this: men would cling to the country in which they were born; for no one would exchange his country for a foreign land if his own afforded him the means of living a decent and happy life.

A fourth result, not here mentioned by the Pope, was that the peasants of Saint-Acheul discovered that the Sunday sermons of their Curé were better worth listening to than they had previously supposed. And here we may leave Saint-Acheul and its enthusiastic pastor.

Another example, this time from the east of France. Here the Curé was considerably worried by the problem of rural depopulation. What made him particularly unhappy was the fact that the young girls of seventeen or eighteen generally left their families and went off to "better their condition" in the towns. Either they never returned at all, or they came back after seven or eight years in the rôle of prodigal daughters—without the repentance.

What was to be done? It was no use exhorting them to stop at home. They were driven forth by economic pressure. A local industry must be provided if they were to remain. The Curé, at his wits' end, went for his holiday to Alsace, and there discovered for the first time the existence of—machines for knitting stockings! The problem was solved.

He purchased several machines and abundance of material. He also commandeered the services of an honest Alsatian, who undertook to teach the girls of the village how to use the machines. The dining-room and study of the presbytery were promptly turned into machine-rooms. How the Curé contrived to say his Office, eat his meals, or read his newspaper, amid the incessant clicking and racket we are not told.

The ordeal for the poor man must have been terrific, for we are informed that a single harmless typist is a distracting neighbour. But in this case the nuisance, though acute, did not last long. The girls soon learnt their lesson and carried off the machines to their homes in triumph, undertaking to pay for them by degrees out of their earnings.

A glut of stockings was the speedy result, and the Curé had next to make arrangements for their purchase by the wholesale establishments, and to institute a co-operative society for their production.

The village is now quite an industrial centre, and its stockings may be recommended. The girls stop at home, knitting industriously, and fitting themselves to be excellent wives and mothers. The economic transformation of the village has been accompanied by a moral and religious regeneration no less striking. And the clatter of the knitting-machines is music to the Curé's ear.

Before leaving France, we must tell the story of the Curé of *la Vieille Loye*, in the Jura. The inhabitants numbered some six or seven hundred, and were mainly occupied in the local glass factories, where they ruined their constitutions by working night and day under iniquitous conditions. Incidentally, they were pagans, which is scarcely to be wondered at. The children were not available for catechism, and their parents had forgotten the way to the church. Their moral condition would not bear description. And M. l'Abbé Tervaux was sent to be their parish priest. Instead of shrugging his shoulders, and saying that there was "nothing to be done," he braced himself up and told himself that there was everything to be done. The only question was where to begin. The people were all in an economic rat-trap, and the first duty was to get them out of it.

The Curé took a good look round. It may here be observed that the various French Curés who have done good work of this kind, have invariably begun by taking a good look round. Reading the rapid summaries of their success, we might imagine that they plunged in with their social panaceas as soon as they arrived in their parishes. Far from it. We may generally assume that they spent long weeks or months in prayer and investigation, anxiety, and much racking of brains. Their discouragements would fill a volume.

The Curé's look round convinced him that the people had no use for him. They regarded him as an objectionable kind of parasite. But he visited industriously, and after a year and a half, four or five of his parishioners came to regard the *soutane* with less obvious feelings of irritation. To them he broached his scheme. He pointed out that the price of groceries in the village was monstrous. It was controlled by a ring of strangers, and the people had to give security, and mortgage their little plots of land. Would they help him to start a co-operative grocery store? He knew something about it.

The store was first established at the presbytery, and began with a few pounds of sugar, coffee, and so forth. Legal objections were raised to such use being made of a presbytery, and the store had to be moved to a cottage. In spite of opposition it flourished. After a few years it found itself installed in one of the most imposing buildings in the whole district, supplying a hundred and twenty families with nearly everything they wanted, and stocked with goods to the value of 25,000 francs. After the co-operative store the Curé founded a sick club, a rural bank, a co-operative dairy, and other useful institutions. The economic condition of the people has, as a result, been improved beyond recognition. And their pastor is no longer

regarded as a parasite. His church, formerly half-ruined, has been repaired, and is frequented.[1]

So much for those who have acted as pioneers of the modern social apostolate of the French clergy. What a few years ago was exceptional is now general. The social efforts of the priests of France are no longer sporadic and tentative but organised and confident. No better general account of the work which is going on has appeared in English than the article in the *Dublin Review* for October, 1913, on "The Present Religious Situation in France," by M. George Fonsegrive. This writer, as we have seen, may himself be regarded as the prophet and to some extent the inspirer of social activity among the clergy.

To M. Fonsegrive's article the reader may be referred for an account of the part taken by the clergy in building up the Catholic educational system of France, including the various technical schools recently founded and directed by French priests. Much good work is also being done by the establishment of Catholic clubs for young people, of which there are more than 460 in the archdiocese of Paris alone, with a membership of over 100,000. State-organised clubs have obtained no such success, for it is the personal contact with the priest that makes all the difference.

The French clergy have realised the necessity of securing and organising lay co-operation. In the present conditions of society such co-operation is required both for the preservation of the faith and for the exercise of those social and charitable activities of the Church which, as we have seen, are so closely connected with religion. The two, indeed, go together, and the efforts of the French clergy in this direction, though primarily intended to promote the spiritual

[1] See also *Prêtres de France* (Rheims: Action Populaire).

welfare of the country must be counted as a social asset of the highest importance.

Associations are rapidly being formed on non-party lines for the various parishes, cantons, and dioceses. A glance at the system as it exists in the archdiocese of Paris will be enough to show the thoroughness of this new method of organisation and the width of its scope.

According to the plan designed by the Archbishop of Paris each parish should have a parochial lay committee, recruited by the Curé and charged with seconding the work of the clergy and of promoting, under the direction of the hierarchy, all undertakings useful to the religious, moral, and social welfare of the parish. It remains dissociated from political action, and the organisation and exercise of religious worship are outside its province. This committee is concerned only with religious activities. It may be divided into several sections occupied respectively with works of religion and piety, works of instruction and education, works for the young and for their perseverance after school-days, charitable and social works, publications and works of propaganda. Programmes drawn up for the moral observation and social study of the district, programmes aspiring to social activities are proposed to the members of the parochial committees.

The report presented to the diocesan congress of 1912 pointed out the existence of ninety-two parochial committees, the congress of 1913 learnt that the figures had risen to 108, representing two-thirds of the parishes of the diocese.[1]

The activity of these parochial committees extends to such matters as after-care, professional training, workmen's gardens, the abolition of night work in bakeries, apprenticeship, housing, Sunday rest, and consumers' leagues. The diocesan committees meet four or five times a year, hold, as a rule, annual congresses, and bring the parochial committees into touch with one another.

[1] G. Fonsegrive, *loc. cit.*

The priest is the pivot of these committees. They enable him to make full use of all the energy and zeal of his parishioners and to secure a hundred points of contact with the community among which he lives. He is back again among the people, and being known at last he is respected and loved. "The unpopularity of the priest in the towns is growing less," says M. Fonsegrive. "Cultivated young men welcome him and even seek him out of their own will."

The organisation of social study and work has, it need hardly be said, reached a very high pitch of perfection among the French clergy. We shall see something in later chapters of the provision made for such study in the French seminaries and of the "Social Days" for priests. The clergy take a prominent part in the *Semaines sociales*, the ninth of which was held at Versailles in August, 1913. They have at their disposal an enormous number of magazines, guides, reference books, bulletins, programmes, and directions of all kinds to aid their social activity; indeed their systematising is carried to lengths which sometimes appear a little tiresome. That flourishing organisation the *Action Populaire* of Rheims, founded by two priests in 1903, is largely staffed by priests and devotes much of its attention to furthering the social work of the clergy by means of publications, correspondence, lectures, and reunions.[1]

France counts among her priests both secular and regular a very large number of writers on social science and allied branches of knowledge. Such names as Antoine, Garriguet, Six, Calippe, de Pascal, Naudet, Garnier, Mgr. Freppel, Leroy, Gayraud, de Besse, will be familiar to social students.

[1] See *Catholic Social Action in France*, by Irene Hernaman in the C.S.G. series of penny pamphlets (Catholic Truth Society).

CHAPTER VI.

BELGIUM.

We may now leave France and turn to a country which is a model to Europe and a source of particular satisfaction to Catholics all over the world.

Belgium is practically entirely Catholic and it is uncommonly prosperous. The land is nearly all occupied and worked by the people. The soil, owing to the care devoted to it, yields more per acre than that of any other country in Europe. Sixty-five per cent. of the agricultural population are farmers and 35 per cent. labourers, as against the 30 per cent. farmers and 70 per cent. labourers of Great Britain. There is little poverty. The system of railways and canals is the most complete in the world, and no other country offers such facilities for cheap travelling. Belgium is proportionately at the head of all the nations in import and export trade. Antwerp is one of the largest ports of Continental Europe. In no other country are the necessities of life so cheap. Taxes are low and education is high—France is more illiterate than Belgium. The arts and crafts flourish. The country is in fact, to quote the words of a recent writer,[1] "socially, a shining example, copied by many and second to none: morally, a worthy exponent of true Christian principles".

Now it is an undoubted fact that the satisfactory

[1] See *The Month*, May, 1910.

social conditions which prevail in Belgium are largely due to the social activity of the clergy.

Take, for instance, the important matter of agricultural organisation. "The fact is beyond question," writes Professor Max Turmann, "that the Belgian clergy have borne the greatest share in the movement which, during the last ten or fifteen years, has determined the agricultural populations to unite in these new associations. It is admitted even by opponents."

The great agricultural association known as the *Boerenbond* was founded by a Flemish Curé. The Abbé Mellaerts, himself the son of a farmer, had studied scientific botany as a student in the Seminary at Malines. Soon after his ordination he was appointed to the little parish of Goor with its 1600 inhabitants. He set to work to build a church, a school, and a presbytery, and to lay out a garden. In this garden he experimented on plant nutrition.

He was the first at Goor to use chemical manures. His first attempts to induce his parishioners to imitate his example cannot be described as successful. The stolid Flemish peasant was slow to understand that a scentless substance could produce in wheat and potatoes a finer growth than nauseous manures.[1]

But the Curé had his chance at last. A disconsolate farmer came one day to say that his wheat was all discoloured and that he would have to pass the plough over it. The priest undertook to save it. The peasant was induced to give an order for twenty-five kilos of chemical manure. But he was very sceptical about it, and his scepticism increased when he came to inspect his purchase. There was "not enough stink about it" for his liking! But the experiment was tried, and

[1] Professor Max Turmann, *Catholic Times*, 19th May 1911.

the crop was saved. The news spread, and the Curé was besieged by demands for chemical manure.

The second step (in 1886) was the convening of a meeting of the St. Vincent de Paul Society with a view to starting a regular agricultural association. Professor Turmann describes the obstacles against which he (like so many other social workers) had to contend :—

"Ah, M. le Curé," replied the more influential of the members, "a capital idea! In olden times that would have been a splendid notion! But nowadays, don't you know, people are not what they used to be. Each one wants to fight for his own hand, and leaves his neighbour to shift as best he can."

"Quite so. But you, good Christians that you are, would you not wish to help your neighbours if you were in a position to do so?"

"Certainly, certainly, M. le Curé; but then you know, your plan won't succeed."

"Well, suppose we try. I'll lead: let those who feel sufficient confidence follow me."

They followed him. Seven gave in their names, and the Peasants' League was founded under the patronage of St. Isidore the ploughman. The League spread all over Belgium, and at the end of 1912 it numbered 560 branches and 50,614 members. To appreciate the full import of these figures we must remember that only one member of a family may join the League, and that there are many other societies more or less connected with the League which are not reckoned as belonging to it, *e.g.* the Raiffeisen Banks and numerous societies for insurance against disease in cattle. We learn that in 1912 the League sent out 70,409 letters and cards and 74,708 documents, gave over 500 public lectures, and distributed fodder and manure to the value of over ten million francs.

The leading part taken by the Belgian clergy in the improvement of agriculture was dwelt upon by Mr. Charles Bathurst, M.P., in a speech to the Church Congress of 1913 held at Southampton, part of a report of which may be quoted here :—

The extraordinary agricultural development of Belgium, and, through it, the increasing spiritual influence of the clergy, were due to the fact that the latter had not held themselves aloof from the industrial interests and workaday lives of their humble neighbours as, alas, was the case in so many English rural parishes. They had thrown themselves whole-heartedly into an organised endeavour to improve the material and social position of their parishioners. In its origin this movement was an effort on the part of the priesthood, supported by the government, to check the spread of Socialism in the rural districts of Belgium, but, whatever the initial motive, the result from an educational, moral, and social standpoint had justified a great national movement which had received popular endorsement in the result of the recent Belgian elections. Belgian bishops encouraged candidates for the priesthood to study botany and the elements of agricultural chemistry, and did all in their power to encourage the parish priests to promote every form of agricultural combination in their parishes. In the words of Mr. Edwin Pratt : "The Church in Belgium has increased her hold upon the peasantry by showing that she recognises and will gladly help to overcome the practical difficulties of their daily lives, while individually the parish priests have won golden opinions by the conspicuous proofs which they have given of both willingness and capacity to become leaders of men in material concerns as well as in spiritual." It was under the influence of the priesthood and the stimulus of co-operation that elementary education had not merely developed character, but increased practical knowledge of husbandry. Many boys in the village schools of Flanders had a more accurate knowledge of the nature and effects of artificial manures than some of the largest and proudest of our English farmers. Whereas thousands

of pounds were wasted in England by applying nitrate of soda, superphosphate of lime, basic slag, and kainit to soils and crops for which they were wholly unsuitable, on many a small holding in Belgium the occupier, as the result of scientifically applying such materials, supported his family simply but comfortably on twenty acres of land, which yielded him 20 per cent. on the capital embarked therein. Could we wonder that in the rural districts of Belgium the priests had a strong hold upon the working population, who looked up to them, not merely as their spiritual advisers, but as their worldly benefactors, and this not as the result of pauperising charity, but of material betterment.[1]

Let us turn to the almost equally important matter of labour credit. Hardly had the *Boerenbond* been formed when the enterprising and devoted Abbé Mellaerts made the work complete by introducing the system of Raiffeisen banks. To-day they are spread all over Belgium and possess six great centres, at Louvain, Liège, Enghien, Bruges, Arlon, and Ermeton-sur-Biert (Namur).

The first of these banks was started at Rillaer, a struggling agricultural village of Belgian Brabant, in 1892. Hitherto the agricultural organisations there had done nothing to furnish the farmers with what they needed most of all—credit for buying manures and implements and, most of all, cattle. The Abbé Mellaerts soon discovered this need and gave a lecture to the agricultural society on the advantages of a Raiffeisen bank. The small farmers were compliant enough; not so the large proprietors of the village. But meetings were held and conferences arranged, and finally on 23rd September, the date of the foundation of the bank, fifty-one persons were enrolled as members; by 1st July, 1901, this number had increased to 164.

[1] *The Morning Post*, 4th October, 1913. It is characteristic that Mr. Bathurst's speech was omitted in the report of other leading newspapers.

From the very beginning it enjoyed the entire confidence of the people. Many a time the President has received visits from shabbily dressed farm-hands. "Sir," he would be told, "I have got 600 francs. I have never dared to trust them to anybody; but now I think they will be better here than in my garden"—and from under his blouse the peasant would take a dirty little bag containing 120 five-franc pieces. "They were redolent of the soil," the President tells us, "and the table upon which they were counted was covered with sand."

Economically a success, the Raiffeisen Bank of Rillaer has also helped towards the religious and moral uplifting of the parish. All the members of the bank and those who profit by it take part in the annual procession of the Blessed Sacrament, organise yearly three general Communions, and regularly attend Mass on Sundays and holidays. "Whatever else the bank has done in our parish," writes the Curé, "it has effected results for which any priest might be grateful to God and to the originators of the scheme."

In 1896 the Abbé Gruel and a friend founded in Brussels the *Ligue du Coin de Terre*. A local branch of this League will buy or rent a certain amount of land, divide it into lots of five "areas" (about 600 square yards) and make these over to the poor gratuitously, thus giving them a start in life. The allotted portions soon produce, if not enough to enable the occupier to purchase the property for himself, at any rate enough to live on. For the first four years of its existence the League disposed of 600 plots and assisted more than 3000 persons.

The Belgian clergy have taken the initiative in other departments of social activity.

In nearly every instance, the parish priest has been the

founder—or at any rate the instigator—of the economic institutions that have been established among his people; he has originated them and he continues to take interest in them.[1]

These activities of the clergy are warmly encouraged by the Bishops who have in some cases appointed priests as inspectors and directors of the social works in their dioceses,[2] to go round from parish to parish encouraging and aiding the formation of rural banks, co-operatives, study clubs, and the like. Many of the Belgian priests possess a considerable amount of technical knowledge, a fact which Professor Turmann illustrates from personal experience :—

It was my good fortune to accompany in his circuit one of these priests who was secretary of a great Belgian Agricultural Association. We arrived at a co-operative dairy, expecting to find the work in full swing. But by some mischance the engine had broken down, and every effort to start it again had proved futile: for the last two hours the engineer had been toiling and moiling, with nothing to show as the result of his labour. By the engine stood the director fuming; this delay meant serious pecuniary loss to him. The priest-engineer took in the situation at a glance. He scanned the motor for an instant, rolled up the sleeves of his cassock, asked for a couple of tools, and set about repairing the breakage like a man who knew the business. In a quarter of an hour

[1] *Loc. cit.*

[2] At the head of all the Christian Federations existing in the country we find the Reverend Father Rutten, O.P. Among the presidents, directors, and leaders of the Professional Unions in the various provinces, we find Abbé A. Logghe for Bruges, Abbé E. Vossen for Brussels, Abbé C. Van Ooteghem for Eecloo, Abbé Parot for La Louvière, the Revn Dr. V. Claes, O.F.C., for Louvain, Abbés Hannigan and Warnotte for Liège, Abbé De Keersmaecker for Lokeren, Abbé Pierlot for Namur, Abbé J. Belpaire for Nivelles, Abbé Jos. Janssens for Turnhout, the Reverend Gustave, O.F.C., for Verviers, Abbé R. Leys for Ypres. Cf. *De Gids op Sociaal Gebied*, Nr. 586, July, 1913.

the damaged parts were temporarily mended, and the machine was working at high pressure to make up for lost time.

Numerous and successful technical schools have been started by the clergy in all parts of Belgium. There is, for instance, the Wandre school founded in 1897 by the Abbé Depaquier for the instruction of file-cutters, locksmiths, iron-workers, and metal stampers; and the school of embroiderers and tulle-makers established at Maldegem by the Abbé Bouckaert. The example of the latter has been followed by the Abbés Voordeckers and Theyskens at Oppuers (Malines). Formerly young girls of thirteen or fifteen used to work in the neighbouring factories; there they often mixed with undesirable companions. In order to obviate such an evil the two priests provided the girls with work in the village and founded a technical school.

Now (writes one of them) it is a real pleasure to see those young girls innocent and happy; they attend Mass every day, receive Holy Communion, many of them daily, others weekly; go together to the school and their work all day long. Now and again they will interrupt their embroidery work and sing a hymn: one would think oneself among angels.

Another type of society is represented by the flourishing League for Christian Women founded in Brussels by Father Langermeersh for the benefit of dressmakers, sempstresses, etc. It numbers over six thousand members, and its bureau is of great service in finding situations. It has also a benefit society and a pension fund.

A word must be said about the admirable schools of domestic economy, such as that founded by Canon Vuylsreke of Bruges and those founded at Louvain by

the Abbé Temmerman. There are no less than 274 such schools in Belgium. This is a matter in which we in this country lag woefully behind. How many young working wives have not the faintest notion of cooking and housekeeping and the care of children.

It is to the Christian Brothers that Belgium owes the Schools of St. Luke. Here are educated the young builders, painters, and decorators who by their admirable taste, their passion for their art, and their thoroughly Christian spirit remind one of the memorable days of the Guilds. A modest course of drawing lessons which was started in Ghent in 1863 under the auspices of the St. Vincent de Paul Society gave birth to the new institution. Now the *Ecoles Saint Luc* are established in five different localities, and number more than two thousand students and fifty-nine professors.

In almost every parish of Belgium we find that the clergy have established "patronages". Ten years ago there were in Brussels alone twenty-five patronages for boys with 4000 members, and nine patronages for girls with 2500 members. At Antwerp the membership was still larger. These patronages, ostensibly mere associations for recreation, have, thanks to the zeal of the priests and their lay associates, effected in Belgium, both for boys and girls, what has been done to some extent among ourselves by the "Catholic Boys' Brigade". By keeping the children away from the dangers of the street and an idle life, and by completing their religious education, they have helped them to preserve their faith, to understand better their duties as Catholics, and to realise the need they have of sound principles and good Christian habits; they have brought many back to the practice of their religion. The influence of the priest over his "patronnés" certainly seems lasting and beneficial. After more than twenty-five years the founder of the patron-

age of Saint-Nicolas (Waes), Père Druwé, hardly ever passes along the streets of the town without being spoken to at every moment by one of his "old boys," now grown up. They come up eagerly, shake hands, tell him the various little incidents of their daily lives, their sorrows and their joys, ask him a thousand questions, and are quite delighted when the dear old priest gives them a kind word of advice together with his paternal blessing.

The "De Vrede" Guilds of Antwerp number many thousands of workmen and date from 1885, the "Central Federation of Christian workers in the Textile Industries" now has a membership of about 13,000 and is rapidly increasing. In the provinces there are 521 co-operative dairies. It is owing to the zeal of two priests (the Abbés Couturiaux and Crousse) that there is hardly a village in Belgian Luxembourg which has not its dairy. Thanks to the Abbé Van der Schueren there are in and around Alost no less than twenty-six.

Rabbit-eating Londoners may learn with surprise that they owe a debt of gratitude to a Belgian priest. The Abbé Lanssen founded a Society at Eereghem (West Flanders) for improving the breed of rabbits. The breeding of rabbits is an important source of income to the peasant of West Flanders: the poorest among them will have their twenty or thirty rabbits. These rabbits are mostly sent to London.

The "Syndicat Général des Voyageurs," etc., with a membership of nearly 10,000 members, counts a priest as one of its founders.

In this country we have a number of unions of employers for the purpose of promoting their own interests. It would be well to imitate the various Continental unions of employers which exist for promoting the welfare of the workers. Thus, for instance, Belgium

has its "Union of Employers on Behalf of Workmen," which was founded at Liège in 1886 by the enterprise of the Bishop, Mgr. Doutreloux. According to the statutes of this union, employers of labour, company directors, and managers of industrial concerns aim at promoting the religious, moral, and economic welfare of the working classes. In 1901 the membership stood at 300.

Very valuable social work is being done by a congregation of secular priests called the *Aumôniers du Travail.* They manage eight or nine hostels for working men—"improved Rowton Houses" we might call them—of which the first was at Liège, and one of the best known is down among the wharves and warehouses of Antwerp and is visited by many British sailors. They also devote much attention to the technical education of boys. Their school of engineering, naval construction, and electricity at Antwerp trains 180 boys who spend four hours a day in the classroom and four in the workshop. The *Aumôniers* have also a diamond-cutting school and are the pioneers of this industry in Belgium.

Most noteworthy of all is the Christian Syndicate movement, which began in 1904 with 10,000 members. In 1912 the membership had grown to over 80,000. In July, 1913, it stood at 102,177. All honour to the distinguished Dominican Father to whom these results are due. Father Rutten, O.P., just after his ordination, became so much interested in the Labour question that he was not afraid to throw in his lot with the workers. *He actually worked in a mine with the miners for three years!* This gave him an insight into their life which no amount of study could have secured.

"Whatever improvement in your position is possible," he has said to the workmen, "that we shall

together try to obtain." No wonder that the Socialists claim him as one of themselves, while the Catholics enthusiastically hail him as their "White General".

The French have a saying that when two Belgians meet the first thing they do is to form a society. At all events it would seem to be true that when a Belgian priest arrives at a parish he sets about forming half a dozen societies. Nor is there anything stiff or cast-iron about his methods of organisation : he is wonderfully resourceful and flexible in his mode of operation and is by no means content to jog along in a traditional rut. An example will illustrate this point better than any statistics.

When the present *Vicaire* arrived at Oppuers he noticed that many of the older lads of the congregation were in the habit of spending their Sunday afternoons (and their weekly earnings) in a public-house. The three o'clock Benediction failed to attract them. Now the *Vicaire* had been a capital handball-player in his younger days and his skill had presumably not deserted him. One Sunday morning, therefore, after the High Mass, he waited for some of the lads and electrified them by asking whether they would like a game of handball. After some hesitation two or three came forward and a game was started. For the second game there were more volunteers, and the *Vicaire's* supply of balls seemed inexhaustible. The following Sunday handball was all the rage at Oppuers. Let the Abbé himself tell us the rest of the story :—

> You may now see our boys playing handball or some other game every Sunday from after High Mass till dinner-time. After dinner they play again till three o'clock when I invite them to have a rest—and come to Benediction. Result : no more waste of money in public-houses, but much more innocent enjoyment and a better attendance at Benediction.

Of course one has to vary the game now and then or offer a box of cigars or something of the kind as a prize. Occasionally, too—but at rare intervals—we organise big competitions. Each boy pays twenty-five centimes and some good benefactor adds a little sum so that we can buy a watch or a pig or something that these country lads would value as a prize. But really these boys do not need much inducement to be kept interested in their games.

This "big-brotherly" relation so characteristic of the Belgian priests towards their people is attended by no lack of respect on the part of the latter; on the contrary, it calls forth a simple and touching reverence for the priesthood and an increased devotion to religious practice. The clergy come out of the church and go to the people: in return the people frequent the church and turn in all their difficulties to the clergy. Here is another instance from Oppuers.

In 1910, at the time of the Brussels Exhibition, the Abbé Theyskens understood that his flourishing Guild of Railwaymen were anxious to make an expedition to the Capital. He guessed that they would, if left to themselves, probably miss all the things worth looking at, waste their money on useless objects and take rather too much to drink. So he proposed to go with them. The suggestion was received with enthusiasm, and the expedition was voted a great success, for it proved economical, instructive, and entertaining. Next day he met one of the railwaymen.

"Well, Francis, did you like our trip yesterday?"

"Did I like it? I should rather think I did! And let me tell you, Father. If ever the Bishop wants to take you away from here—*we'll stop the train!*"

Amongst many other insurance societies founded by priests we find a "Society for Mutual Help" founded at Malines in 1900. It comprises old-age pensions, insurance against sickness, accidents, and unemploy-

ment, etc. Canon Nuten was its first president. The membership is large and is growing rapidly. Similar institutions have been established in great numbers by the clergy, especially since 1894. Thus of Pension Banks alone there are now nearly six thousand. The priests have also founded many societies for insurance against sickness in cattle. That of the Abbé Van den Bulcke has insured half a million sheep and goats.

The great pioneer in the temperance movement was Canon Senden of Saint Trond. Inspired by what he had seen in Ireland and England of the work of Father Mathew, he founded in 1866 the first Temperance Society for Children. His fellow-priests in great numbers soon took up the work.[1] In 1901 no less than 3016 temperance societies had been founded.

That this work has endured must be ascribed to the zeal of the clergy. As a layman of experience observed to the Dean of Hainault:—

> We laymen can and often do take up such works; but what makes them last is the zealous co-operation of the priests;

or, as another layman puts it:—

> Were the clergy not to help us, the Temperance movement, of which we are so proud, would in less than ten years' time be brought to a standstill and its salutary results disappear altogether.

A list of the more important social works to which the Belgian clergy have devoted their attention is supplied by the *Programme of Social Works* drawn up

[1] The Abbé Vaslet founded the *Société Belge de Tempérance* in Brussels (1899); Abbé Lemmens the *Bien-Etre Social* in Liège (1895); Abbé Calmeyn the *Onthoudersbond* in West Flanders; Abbé Paret the *Santé de l'Ouvrier* at Thuin; Abbé Jadin the *Féderation des Sociétés de Tempérance de la Basse-Sambre* and Abbé Watté the *Société gantoise de Tempérance.*

by a Congress of diocesan delegates held at Malines in March, 1896, and sent round to the clergy by Cardinal Goossens with a letter in which the following passage occurred :—

You will herewith find the list of the works which have received the unanimous approbation of this Congress, and which have seemed the best adapted to promote the common good and benefit employers and workmen alike.

We earnestly desire that each one of you, according to local circumstances, should devote every endeavour to the establishment and maintenance of these works. You will find in them ample scope for the exercise of your zeal and at the same time a favourable opportunity for promoting the spiritual well-being of souls.

The Programme, which deserves careful study, is as follows :—

1. The formation and development of workmen's clubs and the economic societies which are connected with them.
2. The formation and development of all those associations which aim at completing the education and professional instruction of the working classes, particularly "patronages" and schools of domestic economy.
3. The formation of Trade Unions (the lines of which are specified).
4. The creation of societies for promoting thrift, insurance against sickness, accidents, and unemployment, old age pensions, and in particular co-operative societies.
5. The creation of societies which aim, by private enterprise or public assistance, at improving the housing of the working classes: particularly those which seek to enable the working man to become the proprietor of his own house.
6. The creation, as far as may be opportune, of factory committees or arbitration boards.
7. The establishment of temperance societies and the furtherance of the temperance propaganda.
8. Employers of labour, and those who share their influence or their responsibilities, such as directing managers

of industrial concerns, company directors, and shareholders will set themselves to procure, by the means indicated in the joint Pastoral of the Bishops, an improvement in the moral and material conditions of the working classes.

9. The support of the popular press and the formation of social study clubs.

10. Besides the works indicated above, in order to assist the rural population, encouragement will be given to the formation, extension, and completion of the various agricultural syndicates. (Special mention is made of Raiffeisen banks and co-operative societies.)

Such, then, is the spacious field in which the social activities of the Belgian clergy are exercised with such success. The words of Cardinal Goossens have been realised. The clergy of Belgium have indeed found that their social work provides "a favourable opportunity for promoting the well-being of souls". By systematic and concerted social action they have proved once again that the Catholic Church is the friend of the people; and the people have in turn shown that they appreciate such generous efforts for their welfare. They are bound to their priests by the closest of bonds, and they find in the devout practice of their religion a social benefit far more precious than even the network of social organisations with which their priests have covered the land.[1]

[1] The standard book on social work in Belgium is *Manuel Social: la Legislation et les Oeuvres en Belgique*, by A. Vermeersch, S.J., and A. Muller, S.J. (Paris: Alcan. Two volumes, 12 fr. 50). See also Max Turmann, *Les Associations agricoles en Belgique* (Paris: Lecoffre); A. Lugan, *Ce que peut un prêtre: origine et organisation du Boerenbond* (Toulouse: Sistac); the Abbés Trigaut and Miserez, *Les Caisses Raiffeisen en Belgique et á l'étranger* (Brussels: Schepens); A. Soenens, *La Mutualité en Belgique* (Brussels: Larcier); L. Varlez, *Les Associations rurales en Belgique* (Paris: Rousseau); the Abbés Malherbe and Lemmens, *Les Sociétés de tempérances* (Brussels: Schepens); B. S. Rowntree, *Land and Labour: Lessons from Belgium* (Macmillan).

CHAPTER VII.

ENGLAND.

PARISH priests in England are a hard-worked body of men. In addition to the ordinary routine of parish work (and the parishes are often large) they have to support two crushing burdens—the building and maintenance of churches and the provision of schools.

In 1850 the Catholic churches of England and Wales numbered 824: in 1913 they amounted to 1797. Some of these are due to the munificence of individuals, but the vast majority have been built by the pence of the poor, and the work of raising funds has pressed heavily upon many a parish priest.

The need of building schools has further increased the strain upon the clergy. The elementary schools alone now number about 1140—more than double the number which existed in 1850—and improvements and enlargements have constantly to be made. Even when the schools are built the priest has no respite: for he has to face the perplexing intricacies of correspondence with the Educational authorities and the scarcely less exasperating task of dealing with obstinate parents. Nor must it be forgotten that previous to 1902 the whole burden of maintaining the schools and paying the teachers as well as providing the buildings fell upon the Catholic body.

It might seem as though the necessity for this perpetual begging could leave little time to the priest

in this country over and above the necessary dispensing of the Sacraments. Yet he manages to visit his flock assiduously. His reputation in this important part of parochial work stands deservedly high among leading writers on the Continent. In what is perhaps the classical work on the care of souls in large towns [1] the late Dr. Heinrich Swoboda, who had closely investigated the matter in many countries of Europe, lays immense stress on the need for personal contact between priest and people, and recognises the devotion in this respect of the priests in this country.

But besides house-to-house visiting, the parochial clergy pay regular visits to hospitals, infirmaries, workhouses, prisons, asylums, and the like. Their ministrations in these establishments are primarily spiritual: yet, like the house-to-house visiting, they have an incalculable social value. They are a benefit to the community, a benefit which is too often overlooked. So much stress is now laid upon the influence of environment that people are apt to ignore the part played by character in social progress. Now the priest directly affects character. His visit will often give the sick man a courage and peace of mind which no medicine could produce. His interview with a prisoner may effect better results than any of the resources of the criminologist. His visit may be the only brightening feature of a workhouse, the only tranquillising influence in the life of the mentally afflicted. His mission of reconciling souls to God is also a mission of social pacification.

But the activity of our priests does not end here. They have built up in their parishes a great number of organisations which deal more or less satisfactorily with the various charitable and social as well as the

[1] *Grossstadtseelsorge* (Ratisbon: Pustet, 1909.)

strictly religious needs of the people. Besides pious confraternities, sodalities, Blessed Sacrament Guilds, Altar Societies and the rest, we find Boys' Brigades and Boy Scouts, clubs, domestic economy classes, mutual improvement societies, temperance societies, evening classes, and so forth. No doubt a great part of the burden of these organisations rests upon the shoulders of the laity; but they depend upon the active co-operation of the priest for their success, and in many cases they make very considerable demands upon his time.

These multitudinous activities of our priests have been summed up by the Bishop of Newport in his address on "The Public Spirit of the Catholic laity":—[1]

> We must remember that, in this country, the priest, in most missions, is obliged to be not only priest, but the organiser of everything. He has not only to perform the sacred offices of the holy Liturgy, to instruct, and to hear confessions, but to beg his own bread, to keep a roof on his church, to provide for the decorum of God's house, to visit and relieve his poor, to seek out the children, to find means for his schools, to conciliate or to fight the public bodies and the non-Catholic world in general, to keep hold of the young people of both sexes by clubs and guilds, and to visit and watch half a dozen public institutions.

We may now consider some of the details of the social work carried on in the various parishes of this country, the main burden of which generally falls upon the priest.[2]

The Catholic Boys' Brigade is now about 15,000 strong. Founded by Father Felix Segesser, it aims at safeguarding the faith and morals of Catholic lads.

[1] Published as a penny pamphlet by the Catholic Truth Society.

[2] For further details see the *Catholic Directory*, *The Catholic Social Year Book*, and the *Handbook of Catholic Charitable and Social Works*.

It developed quite simply out of a drill class held in Bermondsey some eighteen years ago. Now it is organised in diocesan battalions, holds a number of impressive summer camps, and undertakes various social activities for the benefit of the lads.

Drill and the military aspect are the attractive forces, but represent only a small portion of what the Brigade is and does for the boy. Each company has its club, besides its gymnastic exercises, its ambulance lessons, its evening classes and its cricket and football teams.[1]

Many of the clergy, too, with the encouragement of Cardinal Bourne, have promoted the organisation of Catholic troops of Boy Scouts. Indeed, they have been in some districts pioneers of the movement, and their example has been followed by members of other religious bodies. His Lordship Bishop Butt, a keen supporter of this movement, writes as follows :—

There is little doubt but that the movement will spread rapidly among Catholics, as its aims and methods become better known and its value recognised. . . . The Catholic troops which are already in working order have furnished the best plea for its extension by showing that, apart from the manifest good done to the boys themselves, it can render many other real services to the country.[2]

Clubs for men and boys flourish, especially in the North of England, and involve a considerable amount of work on the part of the clergy. Many a priest will endorse the words of Bishop Hedley in the address quoted above :—

For our young people, it is certain, that if you can only get them on any pretence to come round the church door—whether it be in a football or cricket club, a band or a debating society—if you can get them into a reading-

[1] *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1910, p. 106.
[2] *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1913, p. 31.

room, or even a billiard or smoking-room of the right sort—you have a chance, an opportunity, which you would never have had otherwise, of getting at them in matters more important. . . . The Catholic club, whatever its direct, immediate, or ostensible object, is indirectly the safeguard of the faith. As it is, the Catholic club is generally promoted by the priest, almost single handed. Our better educated and learned laymen too often stand aloof.

The Catholic Young Men's Society, founded by Dean O'Brien in 1848, is a non-political organisation which aims at mutual improvement and the extension of the spirit of religion. It is particularly strong in Liverpool, and has a total membership of over 20,000. It has successfully undertaken active work of every description, as reference to recent issues of the *Catholic Social Year Book* will show; and its organisation in connection with the Insurance Act is one of the most remarkable achievements of Catholic enterprise in recent years. As in other cases, the vigour of a branch of this Society generally depends upon the zeal of the chaplain, and the large measure of success which has been attained is another evidence of the devotion of the clergy.

We may here note the increasing interest displayed by the clergy in the formation of parochial study clubs. The number of such clubs is increasing rapidly amongst us, and it must be remembered that they depend upon the approval of the priest for their existence and, as a rule, upon his active encouragement for their success. This particular type of parochial activity has only lately been introduced into this country on any large scale, though it has long flourished abroad with most beneficial results. Hence it has involved on the part of the clergy a readiness to employ new methods and to meet the needs of the time. Many a hard-worked priest has taken down his Devas from its shelf, or

worked his way through a Catholic social manual, in order to be ready to act as Director to a group of miners, or weavers who, as Catholics, have a mission in their particular sphere of labour.

The fields in which most remains to be done by the clergy of this country are perhaps those of temperance propaganda and the after-care of boys and girls who have left school.

The temperance movement has had its vicissitudes in England. The impulse given by Father Mathew and the revival in the days of Cardinal Manning (who founded the League of the Cross in 1873) have not been followed up to the extent which might be desired. The Archbishop of Westminster at the first National Catholic Congress (Leeds, 1910) urged the need of taking this problem seriously in hand ; and the various temperance societies have been federated and are kept in touch by means of a Central Council. Considerable activity in the cause of temperance exists in several of the dioceses, and admirable branches of the League of the Cross are to be found. Individual priests like Father Hays (who founded the Temperance Crusade in 1896) are doing zealous work. Yet on the whole the movement has flagged of recent years. It is to be hoped that the present attempts at revival will be as successful as those which have lately been inaugurated in Ireland. The importance of this matter for the religious and social welfare of the Catholic body need hardly be insisted upon.

No less momentous is the question of the after-care of children who have left school, to which the clergy have lately been giving more attention. Hitherto the school question has absorbed so much of the energy of the Catholic body that not sufficient thought was bestowed upon those who had left school. Much, of course, has been done through the instrumentality of

the Brigade, Scouts, and clubs to which reference has been made. But these organisations, after all, only touch a small percentage of working boys, and there remained a vast number who drifted away from religious influences soon after leaving school. Our leakage in this way has been appalling.[1] It has been a social and economic leakage as well as a religious leakage, and may be considered here under the former aspect, though the two can scarcely be separated in practice, and the remedy for the one is the remedy for the other, *viz.* thoughtful and well-organised Christian charity which will take account of the spiritual and temporal needs of young Catholics.

A very satisfactory method of dealing with the difficulty has been employed in some towns, and notably at Preston, where it enjoys the warm approval of the Archbishop of Liverpool. In each parish there is a committee of men and another of women to look after the working boys and girls respectively. They keep a register in which is entered the names of the children leaving school, with various particulars. Those who need encouragement to go to their duties are assigned to the various members of the committees which meet once a month. These members in a word make friends with the young people. The increased attendance at Sunday Mass in consequence is remarkable; and it need hardly be said that when the religious problem is solved the social problem is far nearer solution.[2]

Turning now to the social and charitable work undertaken by our parish priests in connection with public bodies, we have to record an enormous amount

[1] It has been estimated by some at 15,000 each year.

[2] The Preston scheme will be described in detail in a forthcoming volume of the *Catholic Studies in Social Reform* published for the Catholic Social Guild.

of devoted service for the public good. Much of it passes unnoticed or is taken for granted. At best it receives but tardy recognition. Thus, for example, a memorial has only lately been put up at Selby to commemorate the heroic public service of Canon Best sixty years ago in that town. He risked his life visiting the infected districts during the cholera epidemic and led the way to the formation of the first Board of Health at Selby in 1851. This is but one example out of many in which priests have been foremost in measures of social welfare.

The English Poor Law is by no means a Catholic institution ; on the contrary, it is a deplorable makeshift designed to repair the havoc caused by the destruction of Catholic institutions ; yet Catholic priests have done much to soften its asperities and to make the best of a bad system. A large number of them serve as Poor Law Guardians. The Catholic Guardians' Association counts forty of these in its ranks, and there are more than sixty others who have not yet joined that useful association.

Priests are precluded from election to Municipal Councils, though they are co-opted into the various committees of those Councils. They play a prominent part, for instance, on the Education, Medical, and Care Committees, nearly all the leading priests in the large towns being occupied with some duties of this kind which make a considerable demand upon their time.

Nor must we forget the important service rendered by priests as members of the various County Councils —bodies which have come to have almost the importance of local parliaments. Thus, on the Durham County Council there are no less than four Catholic priests. Their work on the various sub-committees dealing with Insurance, Health, Housing, Small

Holdings and the like is of the utmost public utility. The priest has a more intimate knowledge of the real wants of the people than is usually accessible to the layman, and he is eminently fitted to take part in the devising of measures for the common good.

The priest is, moreover, frequently active in the various Guilds of Help which are coming to play such an important part in modern civic life. He also takes a prominent part in such work as the feeding of necessitous children and co-operated with various associations, voluntary in character but national in scope, which exist for the remedying of social evils. Thus, to take examples at random, Canon Parkinson is well known as a speaker on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Destitution, and Father Hays as a lecturer for the United Kingdom Alliance, of which he is a Vice-President.

Finally, under this heading, we must speak of the work done by priests as members of Children's Care Committees in connection with the Education authorities. These Committees were formed in London in July, 1907, when the London County Council, acting through its Education Committee, became responsible for the provision of food for necessitous children under the Education (Provision of Meals) Act of 1906. These Committees were reorganised two years later and their scope extended from the mere feeding of necessitous children to an active interest in the general welfare of the children in all the elementary schools. Similar bodies, variously organised, are found in different parts of the country, and a large number of priests are actively connected with the work.

So much for the clergy who are in charge of parishes. To these we must add a number of priests who devote themselves, under Episcopal authority, to diocesan or inter-diocesan charitable and social work.

In many departments of social activity the parish, from the nature of the case, ceases to be self-sufficing, and there is need of wider organisation for the working of which priests have to be set aside. In some cases they give their whole time to this work: in others they combine it with parish duties.

To mention a few familiar names. Father Bans has, since 1890, been carrying on the rescue work in the Archdiocese of Westminster and beyond, which Father Douglas (Lord Archibald Douglas), Father Douglas Hope, and Father Barry had successively undertaken since 1876. The story of the heroic struggle of these devoted priests has been graphically told in a book entitled *These My Little Ones*.[1] At the present moment a thousand children are in the Rescue Homes over which Father Bans presides. The great colony at Royden in Essex and the Central Office at 48 Compton Street near Russell Square are the crown and completion of forty years of harassing work, carried on by these good priests in the face of enormous difficulties.

A similar work is being carried on by priests in Southwark and Birmingham and Salford and elsewhere. In Liverpool the great traditions of Mgr. Nugent and Father Berry are being maintained. Catholics are not a wealthy body, and the inadequacy of their material resources in the work of rescue has necessitated an unparalleled devotion on the part of the workers.

The same may be said of the work of Catholic emigration with which the name of Father Hudson of Birmingham is prominently connected. About 350 Catholic children are sent to Canada every year under suitable conditions, and remain under the care

[1] Edited by Father N. Waugh: Sands & Co., 1911.

of an Association until they are eighteen years of age.

Finally, something should be said of the social and charitable work carried on in this country by the religious Orders of men.

A critic has said [1] that "the regular Orders show a singular disinclination to throw themselves into work in the congested districts".

But it must be remembered that most of the priests belonging to religious Orders in this country have their hands already full. Either they are engaged in the ordinary parish work which the circumstances of history have compelled them to share with the secular clergy, or, again they are taken up with the management of secondary schools or with retreats or missions or other works proper to their rule. The non-Catholic is apt to regard these things as waste of time, or at all events as much less important than the relief of material needs. He fails to see that, even in its social bearing, the spiritualising of the people is of primary importance.

At the same time we may readily allow that an increasing amount of social work is demanded of the Catholic body, and that much of this, from the nature of the case, can only be carried on (or, at least, can best be carried on) by a religious Order. Particular social needs of an abnormal character which do not easily fit into the scheme of parochial activity are apt to be overlooked unless taken up by a special body of men whose vocation adapts them for the work. We may instance the admirable ministrations of the Franciscan Fathers to the spiritual and temporal needs of the Kentish hop-pickers.[2] Similarly the work of directing a social Settlement is one which is

[1] Masterman, *The Heart of the Empire*, p. 39.
[2] See *Work in the Hop Gardens*, by B. W. Devas (C.T.S., 1d.).

particularly suited to members of a religious Order, and the Benedictines have set an example at Bermondsey which we may hope to see followed elsewhere.

Moreover, as indicated above, we must not forget that the religious Orders in England are indirectly doing much to promote social well-being by means of the various Third Orders and Sodalities which, though primarily aiming at the personal sanctification of their members, have the effect of developing and guiding the "social sense" to a very remarkable degree. This is particularly the case with the Franciscan Third Order in which, as might be expected, much stress is laid upon the service of Christ in His poor.

> Its first object is to band together men and women of the world in opposition to the tendency to inordinate luxury, selfishness, and pride which the world is apt to beget. But out of this very opposition issues its social endeavour. The Tertiary has to avoid spending money on inordinate personal comforts, and to spend the money thus saved upon the poor; he has to renounce the pride and exclusiveness of class, that he may cultivate brotherly relations with all men. Thus the penitential self-denial leads to neighbourly charity and social works.[1]

In this connection we may recall the wonderful social results of the spiritual retreats which have been organised particularly by the religious Orders. These retreats, said Pope Leo XIII., "procure not only the sanctification of individuals but the general utility of society"—a statement which has been amply confirmed by subsequent experience. The retreat houses of Belgium have become centres of social activity, and in this country they are rapidly increasing the number

[1] Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C., in the *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1911, pp. 71-72. See also his admirable booklet entitled *St. Francis and You*, and *Franciscan Tertiaries*, by Father William, O.S.F.C. (Washbourne).

of social workers and giving them the best possible foundation for social work.[1]

To social literature the clergy in England have not contributed in proportion to their social activity. It may fairly be said that they have been too busy working to find time for writing. When they have taken to the pen it has usually been to meet some immediate need or to give necessary instruction in popular form. The Catholic Truth Society has published a goodly array of pamphlets on social subjects, many of which have bishops and priests for their authors. Larger works, though rare, are not wanting. Mgr. Parkinson has given us an excellent *Primer of Social Science*, Fr. Thomas Gerrard has written on Eugenics, Fr. Thomas Wright on Sweated Labour and on Citizenship, Fr. Cuthbert on Catholic Ideals in Social Life, Frs. Bernard Vaughan and H. Day on Socialism. Abbot Gasquet and Canon William Barry have done notable work in adjacent fields. Fr. Joseph Rickaby's dissertation on the origin and extent of civil authority is almost the only contribution by a priest in this country to a subject which has a vast literature of its own. In a later chapter we shall have occasion to note how much remains to be done and the urgent need of experts who may do it.

[1] For an account of the social results of retreats see my *Retreats for the People* (Sands & Co.), Chapter XIII.

CHAPTER VIII.

IRELAND.

WHEN critics of the Catholic Church and all her ways are asked for a proof of their favourite contention that Catholicism is prejudicial to national prosperity, they point triumphantly to Ireland. "Here," they cry, "you have a Catholic country dominated by priests. What is the result? The priests do little or nothing for the welfare of the people, the population has dwindled to half its former size, and the people that remain are so destitute and shiftless that the English Government has constantly to be coming to their assistance."

The smallest acquaintance with the history of Ireland during the last three centuries should be enough to close the mouth of such critics.

Not even an outline of that history can be attempted here.[1] It will be enough to remark that every attempt of the Catholics of Ireland to build up a healthy and prosperous social order was for generations deliberately strangled by the English Government. Apart from the penal laws which deprived Catholics of their liberty, apart from the confiscations and exactions by which they were made to support the religion of their despoilers, deliberate measures were taken to crush, one after another, the industries by which the Catholics of

[1] Readers may consult Dr. O'Riordan's excellent book on *Catholicity and Progress in Ireland* (Kegan Paul, 2nd ed., 1905) and Mrs. J. R. Green's *The Making of Ireland and its Undoing* (Macmillan).

Ireland strove to make a livelihood. "Forbidden to export their cattle to England by the Act of 1665, the Irish landowners turned their land into sheep walks and began on a large scale to manufacture wool."[1] This woollen trade flourished exceedingly, and was crushed by Parliament in a series of enactments culminating in 1699. Similar enactments repressed other manufactures. "In fact," says Dr. O'Riordan, "persons engaged in any industry in England had only to make known their actual or impending grievances from a rival industry in Ireland, and an Act was passed according to their petition."[2] Agriculture became the last resource of the harassed people; but all agricultural improvement had been made impossible, for Catholics had been disabled from owning land or even from renting it except on short leases: indeed, in large districts the tenants were even forbidden by their leases to break or plough the soil. In merchant industry they were similarly crippled. In short, we see the Catholics of Ireland for generations courageously taking up one after another every possible means of making a living, and being remorselessly driven from it as soon as they began to succeed.

It is, therefore, quite unjust to tax the Catholic clergy of Ireland with any responsibility for the economic troubles of that country. During the penal times the priests could take no public action on behalf of their people. They had to devote themselves in secret to the spiritual needs of their flock, and this they did with an unflinching heroism. Even when Catholic emancipation came, much political work had to be done before anything like social progress was possible. The battle of education remained to be fought. The question of tenure and rent of land remained to be

[1] Lecky, *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 174.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 152.

settled. These and similar questions in the main "affected religion, charity, and the lives and existence of the people, and hence through the nineteenth century the Catholic Church took an active part in politics".[1] That the clergy should take the lead in such political action was inevitable. There was no one else to champion the cause of the people.

Nevertheless even before Ireland was given a chance of working out her social and economic salvation (her religious salvation had been secure throughout), we find bishops and their clergy doing what they could, with their hands tied, to re-organise a shattered social system. Thus eighty years ago we find Archbishop Murray vigorously urging before a vice-regal Commission the adoption of certain measures for the restoration of agriculture and the relief of destitution in Ireland. His recommendations, endorsed by the Commission, were swept aside by the British Government, which imposed on the country a system of its own. This system proved a deplorable failure, and it is only now that return is being made to the recommendations of Archbishop Murray.

Now, however, that the disabilities of Catholics in Ireland have been removed and security of land tenure provided, the clergy have for the first time an opportunity of showing whether their unselfish interest in the people is limited to the performance of spiritual duties or whether it extends to their social welfare. What use are they making of that opportunity?

The clergy of Ireland to-day are, in proportion as the utility of social work becomes evident to them, throwing themselves into that work with all the energy which characterised their former efforts to secure re-

[1] *The Practical Application of Christianity to the Lives of the Irish People To-day*, by the Most Rev. Dr. Kelly, Bishop of Ross (C.T.S.I., Dublin, 1906).

ligious and civil liberty for their people. This, it is hoped, will appear from the following pages.

We may begin with agriculture, for it is in this department of social activity that Ireland has made the most remarkable progress of late years. The development of agricultural co-operation in that country is, as Father Thomas Finlay, S.J., wrote ten years ago,[1] "a phenomenon which deserves the attention of students of economics. It confirms the suggestion of Leo XIII., that co-operation is the resource of the labouring poor, and that by means of it the claims of labour on the wealth it produces can be peacefully and effectually asserted." It is a phenomenon which should prove suggestive to us in England where fields are deserted and slums overcrowded. Agricultural prosperity makes for national stability; it has an intimate bearing on the moral, social, and religious welfare of a people.

The modern co-operative movement in Irish agriculture began in 1889, when Mr. (afterwards Sir) Horace Plunkett and his friends set to work to apply the co-operative principle to butter-making, an industry which threatened to become monopolised by the Danish farmer. A start was made in the South of Ireland and farmers were invited to combine in order to erect central creameries, employing the most scientific methods, which they might own and work for their own profit and at their own risk.

The difficulties were prodigious; but at the end of five years thirty creameries had been established, and the number of shareholders was 1509. The turnover had amounted to £140,780. The milk-supplying farmers gained an increase of profit from their cows of more than 30 per cent.

[1] *The Messenger*, New York, December, 1903.

In 1894 was founded the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, with Sir Horace Plunkett as President and Father Finlay as Vice-President, the activities of which are too well known to need description. All are aware of the important part which this Society plays in the agricultural development of Ireland.

Now the point which concerns us is this: the co-operative societies could not have been made a success without the active sympathy of the clergy, and as a matter of fact that sympathy has been cordially extended to them. No less than *six hundred* priests take an active part in the work as chairmen or members of committees.

But perhaps it may bring the work of the Irish clergy in this matter more vividly before our minds if, instead of multiplying statistics, we examine a few particular instances in which a priest has been able to bring prosperity to his people by means of his social activity.

A case described by Dr. O'Riordan (p. 228) is that of Father Meehan, who some years ago came to Creevelea, a remote district among the mountains of Lietrim, several miles from a railway station. Living was such a difficult matter at Creevelea that a fifth of the population had emigrated in fifteen years. Father Meehan set about to find some means of finding a livelihood for his people. He decided in favour of poultry, bees, gardening, and the like.

> Even then he had first to learn and then to teach his people. . . . It was not an easy change from science and modern languages which he had been teaching with much success for some years before, to the study of poultry, bees, and the growing of apples and pears. But he suffered the change for the sake of his people.

His own proficiency became such that he was accepted as an expert on poultry and bees by periodicals

dealing with these subjects, and the proficiency of his people was shown by the prizes which they carried off. The Creevelea Cattle and General Agricultural Show soon became a notable event, and Father Meehan at his own expense held a stall at the Cork Exhibition.

He has also a Hall for concerts and plays, which are given by the young people of the place whom he has trained. Besides these and other local works, such as Temperance and Libraries, he takes a leading part in several public organisations (p. 229).

We must not omit to mention the agricultural credit banks of the Raiffeisen type which have proved such a success in Ireland. Usury has, in the past, been the curse of the Irish farmer. It not only ruined him but it demoralised him as well. The credit bank, on the other hand, both promotes his prosperity and develops his character. As Father R. L. Mangan, S.J., has well pointed out:—

It brings together the most socially and economically conservative class in the world and gives a feeling of solidarity to a number of scattered individuals: it exerts a splendid moral influence by its insistence on a good character, on the proper employment of money, and on punctual repayment and by the mutual sympathy which it evokes. It has taught the farmer the difference between borrowing to spend and borrowing to produce, the finest lesson in the use of credit which could possibly be learned by a class which has suffered much from dealing on long and ruinous credit.[1]

Now in this matter again the priests have been to the fore. Their influence was required to break down the prejudice with which these banks were at first regarded, and it has been exerted very generously. We may refer to Dr. O'Riordan's account (p. 211) of

[1] *Catholic Times*, 25th February, 1910, the last of four admirable articles on Co-operation in Ireland which deserve to be expanded into a book.

a bank started by Father Dooley in Galway over twenty years ago.

In cottage gardening, too, the priests have given the lead. We may instance the splendid success which has attended the efforts of Canon Doyle in County Wexford. His Technical Instruction Committee, inaugurated about eight years ago, is not only increasing the resources of the cottagers, but is giving them a notable capacity for self-help and a pride of ownership.

Canon Doyle's social activities are by no means confined to promoting cottage gardens. He has worked a veritable revolution in his parish of Tregoat, and his activities extend to the whole of Wexford. Many visitors have admired the fine "Town Hall" which he has succeeded in erecting, and where he holds frequent meetings of his people, and where too he gets them the most skilled instruction that can be obtained in matters agricultural, etc. A wonderful change has come over the homes of his people: they are models of neatness within and without.[1]

The same might be said of the work done by Father Matthew Maguire, parish priest of Trillick, County Tyrone.

All over the country halls and reading-rooms are springing up, under the guiding influence of the parish priests, which are doing much to enlighten and educate the masses of the people.[2]

Some idea of the immense amount of social and charitable work that is already carried on by the

[1] A penny pamphlet published at the *Irish Messenger* Office and entitled *The Reward of Industry* presents in story form a picture which is absolutely true to life of the reforms effected by Canon Doyle at Tregoat.

[2] Some suggestive remarks on the educational possibilities of these parish libraries may be found in a pamphlet by the Rev. J. O'Donovan, entitled *Village Libraries* and reprinted from the *Irish Homestead.*

parish clergy and the religious bodies in Ireland may be gathered from the *Handbook of Catholic Social and Charitable Works in Ireland*.[1] As our eye skims the Index we come to the conclusion that every imaginable social need is here provided for. The arresting reference "Piscatorial School" makes us turn expectantly to page 90. The school turns out to be at Baltimore and the boys "instructed in fishing industries, boat-building, net and sail-making and mending, etc." There are 150 pupils and the manager is a priest. The Vacant Land Cultivation Society [2] (unknown in many English towns, where it is badly needed) is established in Dublin, and the Chairman of Committees is a priest. If you wish to join the sewing classes at Navan you must apply to the local clergy; if, mentally afflicted, you seek a refuge at Stillorgan, you must present yourself to the Father Prior. There are numerous industrial schools under the Christian Brothers; there is an Agricultural College conducted by the Franciscan Brothers at Mount Bellew, and so on indefinitely.

Besides being, as we have seen, the backbone of the rural co-operative societies, the priests have identified themselves with most of the industrial and technical movements which have been started in the towns.

> I know of hardly any industrial work (writes Dr. O'Riordan) carried on through the country for the benefit of the people in general in which priests do not take an active and usually a leading part in initiating and promoting (p. 228).

He gives us an interesting account [3] of the work carried on by Father Maguire, C.C., in the parish of

[1] Published at the *Irish Messenger* Office.
[2] There is an English V.L.C.S. [3] Pp. 213-15.

Dromore, embracing a village and a country district in the County Tyrone. Father Maguire succeeded in stopping the emigration which previously had been appalling. A school of lace, crochet, and similar industries was started in September, 1901, with the counsel of Father Finlay, representing the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. Father Finlay himself has described [1] how this work was begun.

On a Sunday evening in September I met the parishioners, after evening devotions, in an open space outside the church. I explained to them the constitution of a co-operative society, undertook, if they would form a society, to carry their application for teachers to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and to supply them with designs and provide a market for their products through a lace agency with which I was connected. At the close of the meeting 200 girls enrolled themselves as shareholders in the new society. In a month they were at work under skilful teachers. Three months later they sent their first consignment of lace to the agency. Its quality was so good that the buyers found it fit for the London and Paris markets and sent them a cheque for £80. By the end of the year they had sold lace to the value of £1000: this year (1903) their work will have brought them about £3000. Some months since I was invited by this society to attend a festivity which celebrated the opening of a new workshop provided by the girls themselves and capable of accommodating 200 workers. They did me the honour of presenting me with an illuminated address, gratifying no doubt as a personal compliment, but infinitely more gratifying for one statement which it contained, this to wit: that since the foundation of the society not one girl had emigrated from the parish. Previously the parish had furnished a contingent of from fifty to sixty girls to the bands of emigrants which left the district about Easter time.

[1] "The Struggle for Life in Industrial Ireland": an article in the *New York Messenger*, December, 1903.

A particularly valuable adjunct to this lace and crochet industry at Dromore consists of Domestic Economy classes which are held in the same building. Nor is this all. Lectures, however excellent, require to be supplemented by actual practice in the homes. In 1904 Father Finlay went to Dromore to inaugurate a scheme by which a lady should go from house to house, employing the utensils which each family could afford and showing how in various circumstances the teaching imparted in the lectures could be put into practice.

Turning from lace to bacon we may quote a typical extract from the I.A.O.S. report for 1910 :—

> Mr. Welsh gave an interesting account of the foundation of the Bacon Factory at Roscrea. He regretted that the Rev. Father Cunningham was not present to tell the story of a successful enterprise in which he (the Rev. gentleman) had so large a part. The town of Roscrea was a poor dull town, possessing no industrial business above that of a shop. The country around was a good pig-raising country. The farmers felt that they had not been receiving a proper price for their pigs, and a bacon factory was suggested by an inspired person. But money was required to buy pigs, and a factory was required to deal with the meat. A meeting of the local people was held, but when money was asked they melted away. But Father Cunningham, who was the head and front of the business, was not discouraged. He said he would canvass his parishioners and those who had been at the meeting. The result was that he had got four thousand persons to take shares in the company that started the factory. . . . The business was going ahead. Orders were so numerous that they were not able to fulfil them all.

Those who live outside of Ireland seldom appreciate the significance of the Gaelic League as a social force. They are apt to regard it as a misguided attempt to resuscitate a vanishing native tongue. It is, as a

matter of fact, a much needed corrective to certain anti-social forces which threaten Irish life: it recalls to the people their splendid tradition in art and literature. It brightens their homes and lifts their spirits out of the despondency to which centuries of oppression had reduced them. It is far more truly an educative force than many institutions which profess to educate.

Here again the priests have been the mainspring of the movement though they did not initiate it. Dr. Douglas Hyde, the President of the Gaelic League, has dilated enthusiastically to the present writer on the cordial and unflagging co-operation of the Catholic clergy in the work of the League.

One of the most important and successful branches of social reform promoted by the clergy of Ireland has been the temperance movement. Here the priests are the chief and almost the sole workers in the field. The triumphs of Father Mathew, O.F.M., have been repeated by Father Cullen, S.J., who has gathered some 200,000 people into the ranks of his "Pioneers," bound to total abstinence, and whose *Temperance Catechism* has reached a circulation of 300,000 copies.

Some years ago the Bishops especially entrusted to the Capuchin Fathers the task of promoting the temperance propaganda. This they have done with a zeal and an energy that are beyond all praise.

Lastly the Western Bishops, with the Archbishop of Tuam at their head, inaugurated a movement some years ago for the promotion of temperance in that part of Ireland. Their efforts have been so successful (mainly through the medium of temperance retreats and missions in the various parishes) that drunkenness has largely disappeared in these parts.

Another need which is beginning to be supplied in Ireland is that of social education.

The Irish Messenger, under the direction of Father

Joseph MacDonnell, S.J., has long been publishing useful articles on domestic economy, cottage gardening, temperance, and the like, and from the same office as well as from that of the C.T.S. of Ireland has come a certain number of useful pamphlets on social subjects. A few books have been written by priests, such as Father Kelleher's volume on *Private Ownership*, Father O'Laughlin's translation of Dardano's *Elements of Social Science and Political Economy*, and a volume by Father McKenna, S.J., to be referred to presently. But on the whole the Irish clergy have up to the present given us singularly little in the way of social literature as compared with the numerous works by French or German priests. This indeed might naturally have been anticipated from the circumstances of the past, but with the brighter prospects now opening out before the country there is every reason to expect a great advance in this direction.

It is in fact becoming recognised among the Irish clergy themselves that the vast amount of almsgiving charity, for which Ireland is renowned, needs to be supplemented by constructive effort which will aim at preventing destitution, organising labour on sound lines, providing economic security, and in short carrying out the programme of Leo XIII. Recent events in Ireland have shown that if this work of social readjustment is not pushed forward under the auspices of the Church, it is liable to be deflected by external forces. If the priests, the natural leaders of the people, are not at the head of the movement, other leaders will be forthcoming. Again and again in Europe has the same story repeated itself: where the clergy have failed to recognise and to guide the legitimate social aspirations of the people, those aspirations have been exploited in a non-Catholic or anti-Catholic sense. Thus there has been created an unnatural divorce

between religious belief and social effort, culminating too often in the gradual decay of the former.

From this point of view the recently published volume of *Social Action* pamphlets by Father McKenna, S.J.,[1] is of quite remarkable importance. Not only does it give an admirably clear statement of the bearing of Catholic social principles on such matters as Wages, Trade Unions, Women's work, Sweating, Housing and the like, but it sets forth with the utmost frankness the need in Ireland of concerted social study, popular social education, and constructive social work.

Nowhere in Europe, I make bold to say, is social charity, as distinguished from almsgiving charity, less known or practised. In every parish in the land, in town and country, there are many pious earnest Catholics who perform their religious duties with regularity, whose lives are models of all the domestic and religious virtues, who give openhandedly of their hard-earned and not too abundant means to the charitable institutions of their neighbourhood, and who give generously alms to the poor whom they meet in the streets or on the highway.

Having done this they rest content. It never occurs to them that their charity should mean anything else than almsgiving or their annual subscription to a hospital or an orphanage. Yet the enlightened Christian charity recommended by the Pope, and which we must practise if we are, as St. Paul says, "to re-establish all things in Christ" (Eph. i.), means much more. It means that we should interest ourselves in the conditions of life, in the prospects and difficulties of our poor brethren; that we should examine into the causes of their suffering; it means that it is more blessed to prevent disease than to cure it; more blessed to give good dwellings to the poor than to give them hospitals for diseases contracted in bad ones; more blessed to enable the widow to rear her children than to place them in industrial schools; more blessed to give work than a

[1] Dublin: *Irish Messenger* Office, 1913, and C.S.G. Office, 1 Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.

dinner or two to the starving man; more blessed to have the young taught a useful trade than to secure them a job that will teach them nothing; more blessed to educate in Christian principles and unite in Christian associations the helpless day-labourers and the work-women than to give them odd doles and odd jobs. In short, God asks each of us to give to His suffering brethren the charity of our personal effort as well as that of money, the gift of self—a greater and more costly gift than of alms (pp. 111, 112).

And again :—

Of the more constructive forms of charitable endeavour, of Catholic social work properly so called, there is little, very little indeed in Catholic Ireland. In this respect as in so many others, we are thirty or forty years behind the times (p. 121).

Father McKenna cannot be accused of overstating the amount of social work to be found in Ireland. Indeed he hardly claims sufficient credit for the constructive social work which, as we have seen, is actually being carried on by a great number of priests in that country, especially in the matter of agricultural organisation. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly a vast amount of work to be done of the kind which Father McKenna indicates, and this fact is becoming more and more widely recognised among the clergy and laity of Ireland. Indeed systematic efforts are now being made to organise Catholic social study among the educated laity as well as among the working classes, and this movement is so important that a word must be said about it.

"The Leo Guild" was founded in Dublin in May, 1912, by a group of Catholic laymen at the University, in co-operation with a special sub-committee of the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland. A priest acts as Director of Studies, others are on the General Council,

and the local clergy co-operate most generously with the work. During 1913 five "popular circles" were started in different parts of Dublin and several others in Belfast and elsewhere. A full account of the methods of the Leo Guild appears in the *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1914. The scheme promises to give a decided impulse and a right direction to Catholic social effort in Ireland; such a "movement of ideas" is the usual prelude to momentous reforms.

The cause of social reform in Ireland has received many warm expressions of approval from the Bishops, who have encouraged the priests to take part in it. The Bishop of Ross in the Inaugural Address delivered at the C.T.S. Conference of 1905 spoke as follows:—

> This movement for agricultural and industrial improvement and development has reached our own country. The movement is yet in its infancy, but it is struggling to rise from its cradle, to stand on its feet and to march steadily over the land. In many districts the priests have been active and successful workers. In other districts the priests have held more or less aloof. A few, perhaps, are still unconvinced of the necessity or utility of such work. I venture to plead for general activity along the whole line.

Cardinal Logue at the annual meeting of the Maynooth Union, 27th June, 1912, spoke as follows:—

> I do not see why we should not do in some way in this country what has been done in Belgium. In Belgium, I believe, they pick out a number of priests and these priests take a special course in agriculture at the Catholic University at Louvain, I believe, for the purpose of being able to advise the people afterwards, and I think it would be a magnificent thing if, by summer schools or post-graduate courses in the new National University, there was some opportunity for a number of the priests to make themselves up in this

subject. . . . We are only groping our way directed simply by common sense and without an adequate knowledge of the principles. If the principles were thoroughly studied the priests of the country would be able to advise the people, and I think it would do a great deal towards keeping them correct and properly safeguarded against the danger of being carried away by agitators. When I speak of agitators I don't mean honest men who are trying to benefit and improve the people, but there are self-interested agitators.

In future Irish priests must do a great deal for the direction of the people. I don't mean that they should enter as much into politics as formerly, but in social questions you must do a great deal for the direction of the people and be possessed of the necessary qualifications to enable you to direct them wisely and to direct them well.[1]

Besides Cardinal Logue and the Bishop of Ross (whose work on Parliamentary Commissions is so highly valued) other members of the Hierarchy have stood forward prominently in this movement and given it special encouragement, as, for instance, Dr. Foley, the Bishop of Kildare, Dr. Browne of Cloyne, Dr. Sheehan of Waterford, and Dr. O'Donnell of Raphoe, the last named having been for many years a member of the Congested Districts' Board. This list is by no means exhaustive.

It will scarcely be necessary to call the reader's attention to the important Pastoral Address of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, assembled in special meeting on 11th February, 1914, to their flocks. The whole document should be carefully studied. Sociological questions, say the Bishops,

> cannot be too well understood by the shepherds and guides of the people.

Circles for study, debate, and work are specially re-

[1] From he report in the *Freeman's Journal*, 28th June, 1912.

commended. Even this slight sketch of the social activity of the clergy of Ireland may have made it clear that they have already accomplished much. Yet it is hardly necessary to add that more remains to be done. It is evident that Ireland has the prospect of a great period of social development in which the priests are the natural leaders. Not that it is possible or desirable for them to take the whole of the work upon their own shoulders, since the co-operation of the laity is becoming increasingly necessary; but the clergy may well be (as, indeed, to a great extent they already are) the inspiring influence, guiding and encouraging and training the lay workers, keeping prominently before the minds of the people the great social principles laid down by the Catholic Church.

Perhaps in no country in the world has Catholicism such a splendid opportunity as in Ireland of establishing a healthy social order and of showing to the world an example of that fair and prosperous commonwealth for which Leo XIII. would have us strive. In other lands the issues have been confused and the minds of large sections of the people poisoned by irreligion and its accompanying anti-social tendencies, and committed to doctrinaire systems which would fetter human liberty. Hitherto Irish social enterprise, as we have seen, has been hampered and crippled. Now it is getting its opportunity. We see a nation of peasant proprietors—the ideal of Leo XIII. fulfilled. We see the priests bound to the people by long years of suffering borne in common, priests who, brought up, for the most part, on the Irish farms, have an intimate knowledge of rural needs and conditions. We see that to the marvellous religious and charitable organisation is now being added a growing tendency to industrial organisation inspired by Christian principles.

The Catholic world is watching with sympathy, trusting to see Ireland, true to that teaching of which the clergy are the custodians, display the beauty of a supernatural faith worthily reflected in an enlightened and harmonious social order.

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

It would be exceedingly rash to generalise about the social work of the Catholic clergy in the United States. Where we have seventeen thousand priests belonging to various nationalities and working under the most diverse circumstances over an enormous area, it is clear that a comprehensive statement of their social activities would present difficulties even were information available. As a matter of fact, information is not available. Such pressing needs of the moment as the building of churches and schools have hitherto left American Catholics little time for organising bureaux of social information, collecting statistics or making a scientific study of methods. During the last few years, however, a movement has been made in this direction. To give one notable instance, the American Federation of Catholic Societies, in its National Convention at Milwaukee in August, 1913, decided to establish through its Social Service Commission a Catholic Statistical Bureau.[1]

For the purposes of this chapter we must be content with such information as may be gathered from the reports of the (often over-lapping) Catholic societies, and with the information kindly supplied by the leaders

[1] An office has been established at 503 Murray Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Secretary is the Rev. Peter Dietz.

of some of the chief Catholic social movements. The result if not complete may at least be suggestive.

There is a growing feeling among the Bishops and priests of America that more systematic social action is called for on the part of the clergy. Thus we read in the Report of the Social Service Commission at the Convention above referred to :—

> It is a regrettable fact that many of the clergy do not take a larger interest in the temporal well-being of their parishioners. The mission of the Church does extend into these fields and many souls are lost because it is neglected.

The Rev. J. A. Ryan, D.D., whose name is familiar to us in England as that of the foremost Catholic authority on social questions in the United States, writes as follows :—

> Most of us are as yet overwhelmed by a sense of vagueness and helplessness with regard to the whole matter of social questions, social work, social study, social activity, and social reform.[1]
>
> As a general statement (writes Father Dietz) it may be said that the bulk of the clergy are not sufficiently interested; but there has been a tremendous improvement of late years, and a number of our seminaries now have social courses, so that the coming clergy will give much new promise.[2]

We shall have occasion to note the warm encouragement given to this movement by the Bishops. But we may first glance at some recent efforts to organise the social work of the clergy and to bring priests into touch with one another for the purpose of concerted social action.

The National Conference of Catholic Charities is doing work of the greatest importance which particularly deserves the attention of Catholics in England.

[1] *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1913, p. 118.
[2] *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1914, p. 132.

In this matter America is far ahead of us. The objects of the Conference are :—

1. To bring about exchange of views among experienced Catholic men and women who are active in the work of charity.

2. To collect and publish information concerning organisation, problems, and results in Catholic charity.

3. To bring to expression a general policy towards distinctive modern questions in relief and prevention, and towards methods and tendencies in them.

4. To encourage further development of a literature in which religious and social ideals of charity shall find dignified expression.

The first meeting of the Conference was held in Washington in September, 1910. Among the papers read on that occasion was one on "The Reform Problems which the Church should meet," by Mgr. White, one of the founders of the Conference, whose death the following year deprived the Catholic Church in America of one of its noblest priests and Greater New York of one of its most prominent and most respected social workers. In this address (which has been reprinted by the International Catholic Truth Society) Mgr. White made an outspoken appeal for social study and action on the part of clergy and laity, and for a Catholic social reform movement on national lines. His recommendations made a deep impression and may be said to have marked the beginning of a new chapter in Catholic social effort.

The second meeting, also at Washington, took place in September, 1912. Its volume of *Proceedings* running to 400 pages, is a mine of valuable information and testifies to the earnestness and scientific spirit of the four hundred delegates. The Bishop of Pittsburg preached the opening sermon, and the inaugural address was delivered by Mgr. Shahan, the President of

the Catholic University. Three papers were read on the city and its poor, and three on co-operation. Sectional committees dealt with the problems of needy families, dependent children, delinquent children, and dependent sick. Papers were read and discussions held at these sectional meetings on the trained worker, desertion, the pensioning of widows (among the speakers here was a Mr. Weller), the after-care of families, home recreations, inebriety, immigration, defective children, the causes and prevention of degeneracy, etc. Lay delegates predominated in numbers but a large number of priests attended, read papers and took part in the discussions. The Hon. President of the Conference is Cardinal Gibbons, the President Mgr. Shahan, and the Secretary (to whose power of organisation its success is largely due), the Rev. Dr. William J. Kerby.

As we turn the pages of this fascinating report we are struck by the freshness and enterprise which it reveals, the glimpses which it gives us of close contact between priests and people, the alertness to make use of the experience of others and to take up new methods when they are seen to be effective. The delegates are evidently on the look-out for good ideas. Thus after listening to some admirable papers on the care of dependent children, they demand that a committee should be appointed "right here" to carry into execution the conclusions which have been arrived at. Boundless hopefulness and spirit are shown in facing problems the magnitude of which would discourage the less optimistic. Take, for instance, the single question of Catholic deaf-mutes. Of these there are said to be fully 18,000 in the United States; yet only 1192 are provided with schools, and there is only one small school of the kind in all the Western States. The Episcopalians have thirteen ordained deaf minis-

ters, twenty licensed lay readers, and a still greater number of Bible-class readers. Other bodies are also well provided in this respect, but the Catholics have but a solitary missioner devoted exclusively to the deaf. The need is appalling: yet mark the prompt and practical answer: ten priests in Pittsburg alone are learning the sign language, and in one seminary twenty-four students have formed a class for the study of deaf-mute needs.

The enormous problem of immigration, too, is squarely faced by the clergy at this Conference, and most valuable suggestions are made for dealing with it. The result of such meetings is already being seen in the growing co-ordination of Catholic social and charitable effort.

A somewhat similar gathering in which the clergy again took a prominent part was the first Annual Charities Conference for St. Louis, organised by Archbishop Glennon in 1912 and representing thirty-two local associations. At this Conference special attention was directed to the subject of Catholic Social Service, stress was laid on the training of social leaders and workers, and a permanent committee was formed which has already put a corps of trained speakers into the field. The interest taken by Archbishop Glennon in this work is seen in the following announcement sent by him to all the parishes of the archdiocese to be read at the Sunday Masses:—

I am convinced that our people should be conversant with and awakened to their social duties as Catholics and their social rights as citizens. I hope for the inauguration in each parish (at the convenience of the parish priest and the lecturers of the Commission) of a course of lectures selected from the accompanying list. Should there be no hall in the parish, the church may be used, especially if the lecturers are ecclesiastics.

At first these lecturers will be received with indifference and probably by a small audience, unless the priests of the parish promote the same with energy and enthusiasm, and in advance of the lecture itself. We bespeak for the Commission your active sympathy and cordial support.

This work of the training and provision of Catholic lecturers has, in fact, made striking progress in the United States during the last few years. A bureau has been established at the Loyola University, Chicago, at Canisius College, Buffalo, and at Fordham University, New York.

But to return to the work of charity organisation. We find a growing tendency among Bishops and priests to co-ordinate the various charitable activities of diocese or parish, to aim at prevention as well as cure, and in general to infuse into Catholic social action not only zeal but thoughtfulness. Thus Cardinal Farley in August, 1913, established in the archdiocese of New York a society known as "The United Catholic Works" to serve as a centre of intercommunication between the various religious, social, and benevolent associations of Catholics, and to promote sound measures of social reform.

On a much larger scale is the American Federation of Catholic Societies to which Bishops and priests have given the warmest encouragement and support. The story of this great organisation, which deserves careful study, has been told by Bishop McFaul, one of its founders.[1] At its convention held in Cincinnati in 1901 we find 250 delegates assembled, representing nearly two million Catholics. At present the membership is nearly three millions. One of the objects of the Federation is "the infusion of Catholic principles into public and social life". Thus at the convention

[1] See also the extracts from the various Reports published by the Federation.

of 1912 sympathy was expressed with every legitimate effort

> To obtain the total abolition of all unnecessary Sunday work; to obtain a living wage to enable the workers to live in frugal comfort; reasonable hours of work; protection of life and limb; abolition of child labour; just compensation in case of injury; the proper moral and sanitary conditions in the home, the shop, the mine, and the factory; and we pledge our support to all legislative action instituted to this end.

Sympathy is also expressed with trade unionism, and special stress is laid on the value of study circles as a method of forming a sound public opinion.

The American Federation of Catholic Societies has always enjoyed the warmest support of the clergy. Pope Pius X. has commended its "prudence worthy of the highest praise," and Cardinal Falconio assures us that it is "working distinctly under the protection and guidance of the American Hierarchy and with the full sanction and the blessing of the Pope". Cardinal O'Connell writes:—

> I do not hesitate to say that the day is fast coming when the Federation will be the most potent barrier in all this broad country to the awful social evils which already threaten its prosperity.

A large number of Bishops and priests also take an active interest in the work of the *Central Verein*, a body which has done pioneer work in the field of social reform and which deserves careful study. Its beginnings date back to 1854 when, under the influence of the movement towards Catholic organisation which had started in Germany a few years earlier, some zealous priests and laymen in Buffalo, with the warm encouragement of the Bishop, endeavoured to unite the various societies of German Catholics in the United

States. Seventeen such societies responded and the *Central Verein* was founded in Baltimore in 1855. In 1901 it was reorganised, the formation of state leagues was encouraged and these were incorporated in the *Verein.* These leagues now number sixteen, with a membership of 150,000. The number of those who in one way or another are influenced by the *Verein* is said to be considerably over a million. The work has been warmly praised by the Holy See and the clergy give it cordial support. The various state leagues at their Congresses pass resolutions demanding from State legislatures and from Congress the passing of such measures as are necessary to safeguard the spiritual, mental, and physical interests of the working man and his wife and family. The *Verein* has been specially commended by the Apostolic Delegate for its zeal in the cause of education, and its efforts on behalf of immigrants have also been very successful. Of recent years it has taken up in a systematic way the work of popular social education. It issues an admirable monthly journal *Central-Blatt and Social Justice,* and it has published a number of useful popular pamphlets on social questions. It is, moreover, establishing an institution to be known as the Ketteler House of Social Studies in connection with the Loyola University in Chicago. In all this work the clergy have taken a prominent part, as writers, lecturers, and organisers.

Besides taking part in the various Catholic organisations individual priests are to be found co-operating more and more with various public bodies in that work of social investigation for which the priestly office forms such an excellent qualification. It was under the direction of a priest, Father Edwin V. O'Hara, that the Oregon Consumers' League began, in August, 1912, a thorough survey of the conditions obtaining

among women and child workers, including wages, housing, conditions of work, cost and standard of living. As a result of this investigation the Oregon legislature created an industrial Commission and gave it definite and effective powers.

Dr. Ryan, too, is one of the most active members of the Committee on minimum wages of the National Consumers' League, and his paper read before the National Conference of Charities and Correction at St. Louis in May, 1910, led the *Survey* to remark that—

> No one could have asked a more courageous stand by an ecclesiastic in defence of wage-earners' efforts.

Or again we may instance the late Father Francis Foy who served as secretary of the New Jersey State Charities Aid and Prison Reform Association for four years and was President of the New Jersey State Conference in 1908, besides being an active member of a number of public committees. Of this devoted priest the *Survey* (a non-Catholic publication) wrote :—

> His wise head and warm heart balanced each other so thoroughly that sympathy and sanity were one with him, and though he was ever open minded, his attitude was eminently judicial. . . . He kept thoroughly abreast of the whole literature of social welfare and economics, but his attitude was that of a humble servant who constantly seeks more light to guide his course.[1]

Instances of this sort could, of course, be multiplied indefinitely if space allowed, but the above examples must suffice to illustrate a type of American priest which is becoming widespread.

The tendency is, then, for the social and charitable work of the American priest to become more methodical and scientific. There is a growing anxiety to

[1] Vol. xxv., No. 20.

prevent destitution instead of being content with relieving it. Something like a concerted plan is being evolved by such organisations as the Conference of Catholic Charities, the Catholic Federation, the *Central Verein*, the Knights of Columbus, and others. The social needs of special classes of people are being recognised and to some extent met. Legislation is being watched—and influenced. The over-lapping of charitable endeavour is less than it used to be. No doubt there is still much that is casual and chaotic in the Catholic action of such a vast continent; but the forces of order are at work and the energy and idealism of the American temperament lead us to believe that they will triumph.

Two very encouraging features of Catholic social work in America may here be noted. The first is the recent growth of study clubs which there as here are rightly regarded as the key of the situation. Groups of laymen in the various parishes studying under the direction or at least with the encouragement of the parish priest cannot fail to sharpen the social sense of the community and to give a decided impulse to local Catholic action. Another hopeful sign is the stress which is being laid in some quarters on the parish as not merely the ecclesiastical unit but the social unit as well. Where a sentiment of mutual responsibility is fostered in a parish many evils may be checked which would otherwise grow until they demanded the interference of the civil authorities. Much was made of this point at the National Conference of Catholic Charities in 1912. Thus it was reported that the Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters (with a membership of 35,000) had undertaken the work of looking after delinquent children. In every parish of the State was to be established a volunteer probation board consisting of three men and two women "of

intelligence and excellent repute," who, together with the parish priest, were to establish relations with the local police officials, courts, and probation officers for the purpose of saving boys and girls from commitment to public reformatories or charitable institutions.

> Thousands of boys and girls are being committed to prisons, reformatories, and asylums in this country to-day who would not be so committed if they had some one interested enough in them to say a good word for them or to promise to look after them and advise them.[1]

This work is under the direction, it need scarcely be said, of the ecclesiastical authorities, and the account of it given by Father M. J. Scanlon at the Conference met with such cordial approval that we may expect to see it being adopted elsewhere. (It may be added that the Knights of Columbus have long been doing admirable work of the same kind.) Father Scanlon's plea for "parochial pride" is illuminating and capable of wide application.

The American clergy encourage the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul which has over 700 conferences and nearly 13,000 active members. The conferences in East New York are claimed to be the best in the world.

More attention is also being paid by the American clergy to the need of training social workers. To quote from one of the papers at the same Conference :—

> I maintain that Catholic social work cannot be carried on along broad progressive lines with our present organisation, and I urge that there be established in every large city a central bureau in charge of a trained worker; that in each parish or group of parishes, according to the local needs, we have parish visitors, trained in the work, and

[1] *Report*, p. 297.

that around this organisation of trained workers be grouped our present volunteer forces (p. 110).

Father T. J. Lynch, commenting on this proposal, said that the Cardinal Archbishop of New York had already determined to make extensive use of trained workers without, however, excluding the volunteers. The work could only be done satisfactorily by paid workers.

Maybe the title "paid workers" sounds strange to the Catholic. If it be pagan, Christianise it; put the work under the parish priest and I will guarantee there will be no paganism in that (p. 111).

The social work of the priest is of course complicated by the crowds of immigrants who are pouring into the country; and who require various methods of treatment according to their differing social needs and racial characteristics. The flood of Germans and Irish who settled in America from the 'forties to the 'eighties was succeeded by a host of Italians and Slavs. Much has already been done for these people by Catholic organisations, but there remains an immense field of work for clergy and laity alike. The Italians in the cities are often living in most unhealthy conditions, and the mortality among them is higher than that of any other nationality. Of the Slavs there are said to be already eight or ten millions in the United States, and the Catholics among them stand in special need of religious and social aid. There are approximately 200,000 children of foreign birth in the Catholic parochial schools, but the level of these schools requires to be raised and their work supplemented by more in the way of aftercare. Efforts are now being made to meet the immigrants on arrival and to put them in touch with Catholic organisations. The Catholic Colonisation Society is beginning to do

excellent work. It is incorporated in the State of Illinois, Archbishop Glennon is Honorary President and Archbishop Messmer is General Director. It inspects and approves land where the immigrants may be recommended to settle, and one of its priest promoters has advocated the appointment of a chaplain on every ship "to talk land to the immigrants". Steamship companies have shown themselves ready to co-operate.[1]

Multitudinous social institutions owe their origin and success to the zeal and enterprise of individual priests. Such is the famous "Father Dempsey's Hotel" for the unemployed at St. Louis, or "Father Wynhoven's Hotel" in New Orleans. The latter, opened in 1911, provided lodging for 75,000 men in the first two years and also serves as a free labour bureau. Another line of work is represented by the school founded by Father T. J. Tuohy at Jonesburg, opened in 1913. The school stands in a farm of some hundreds of acres and is designed to teach boys and girls agriculture, mechanical trades, and domestic economy.

The American clergy devote a considerable amount of attention to the cause of total abstinence. The Catholic Total Abstinence Union was founded forty-three years ago in Philadelphia and has now spread all over the country. The spiritual director is the Bishop of Pittsburg and the president is the Very Rev. Peter O'Callaghan, C.S.P. The latter was one of the delegates appointed to represent the United States at the Anti-alcohol Congress at Milan in September, 1913. The official organ of the Union is *The Catholic Temperance Advocate*.[2]

[1] An excellent account of the Catholic Colonisation Society by Archbishop Messmer may be obtained from the office of the Society, The Temple, Chicago, Ill.

[2] The national head-quarters are at 804 Wabash Avenue, Chicago. An account of the Union has been written by Bishop Canevin, and a

The Priests' Total Abstinence League of America, now ten years old, encourages the clergy to promote abstinence by example as well as by exhortation.

Something remains to be said about the attitude of the American clergy towards labour questions and trade unionism. The American Federation of Labour was founded upon principles entirely acceptable to Catholics, and there has been no attempt among Catholics to form unions of their own. Of recent years, however, a number of socialist agitators have found their way into the trade union movement, and, as Father Dietz has said, "the Church cannot now speak unqualifiedly in favour of the American Federation of Labour". Grave warnings have been addressed to the Federation by Catholic leaders, to the effect that if anti-Christian tendencies develop a preponderating influence Catholic workers will leave the Federation and organise for themselves. The need for such a momentous step has, however, not yet arisen, and the feeling among Catholics seems to be that it may be averted if Catholic trade unionists will use their united influence against socialistic tendencies in the unions. Thus among the resolutions adopted at the Milwaukee Convention (1913) of the American Federation of Catholic Societies, we find one which recommends Catholics to attend the meetings of their local unions faithfully and to take an active part in their deliberations, "using all their influence against the propaganda of class hatred". Similarly at the Convention of the American Federation of Labour held at Seattle in November, 1913, we find the Catholic Bishop of Helena attending as a delegate and delivering an eloquent address on the Catholic Church and Labour; after showing that unionism has the full support of the Church, he urges the Federation to steer clear of

report of the last Congress will be found in the *Advocate* for September, 1913.

economic theories which would alienate its Catholic supporters and prejudice the best interests of unionism. Unionism should welcome the help of the Church : a split would be most regrettable, and the Bishop hoped that the need for it would never arise.

We may note that the Bishop of Seattle also spoke at this Convention, and that Father Peter Dietz, attending as a fraternal delegate regularly since 1909, follows the proceedings from year to year. Thus the American clergy would appear to have opportunities for more immediate participation in trade union movements than are available in England. Yet the influence of the priest in America on unionism is likely to be exercised far more effectively by indirect means which are open to the priest in this country. The Catholic Convention at Milwaukee above referred to makes a point of recommending those study circles which the clergy may do so much to promote, and in which Catholic trade unionists may fit themselves to take an active part in their unions and to keep those unions on sound lines.

The policy, therefore, which commends itself to the Catholics of America is that Catholic trade unions should not be formed, but that Catholics should join the national unions and take a prominent part in them. It is also desirable (in accordance with the instructions of the Holy See) that Catholic members of trade unions should belong to a Catholic society which, though not itself a trade union, will safeguard their religion and inspire them with Catholic social principles. Such a society was founded in America in 1909 under the name of "The Militia of Christ". It has been described as a Catholic auxiliary to the trade union movement and a clearing-house for Catholic trade union thought. It has the cordial approval of the Apostolic Delegate, the Archbishop of St. Louis, and other ecclesiastics, and

the active support of a number of the clergy. Father Peter Dietz, the Secretary, keeps in active touch with the labour situation of the country and furnishes newsletters to nearly three hundred labour papers. In this and other ways he has been able to exert a strong influence in the interests of legitimate trade unionism.

This field of work has been most responsive, needs intense cultivation, and promises the richest fruits, provided means are found to carry it forward. The close association with working men; the honest endeavour to understand their aspirations and ideals and to show the proper sympathy in the cause of labour has brought the secretary a return of confidence and goodwill, than which no greater compensation could well be imagined. . . . A memorial signed by the most prominent Catholic labour leaders, asking for a document on trade unionism from official American Catholic sources, has been presented by a committee in person to his Eminence Cardinal Gibbons. This memorial has been most graciously received by the Cardinal with the assurance of great personal interest.[1]

The Bishops in America as elsewhere have warmly encouraged the priests to take up social work and to study social questions. Archbishop Messmer, for example, has said that it is

A sacred duty for Catholics who have the true welfare of the people at heart and to whom Divine Providence has given means and opportunities in assisting in the moral and social uplifting of their fellow-citizens, to fit themselves for that work by the required study of social problems. Again I say this applies especially to the Catholic clergy who are the leaders of the people in all that makes for the spreading and strengthening of good and the retarding and uprooting of evil. Hence I would like to see a fine galaxy of active and energetic clergymen from all our Western States assemble in a spirited discussion of the interesting subjects

[1] Report of the Secretary of the Social Service Commission, 1912-1913.

presented. Such an example on the part of the clergy will not be lost upon our Catholic laymen.[1]

The Bishop of Pittsburg has recently appointed a Diocesan Commission of Labour, consisting of the Vicar-General and nine of the leading clergy. It aims at building up a school of economic thought among the Catholic working men, and it is preparing a series of short papers on very practical economic subjects which may be read and discussed at the branches of the various Catholic societies. The meetings are to be open to all working men.

Already have the American clergy produced a number of books dealing with social subjects. Bishop Stang's *Socialism and Christianity* (warmly praised on its appearance by the late Mr. C. S. Devas), Father Ryan's *Living Wage*, Father Ming's two books on Socialism, and Father Husslein's *The Church and Social Problems*, find readers in England. Father Dewe has written a *History of Economics* and Father E. J. Burke has lately published a useful text-book of *Political Economy*. With the increased provision of specialised social study in American seminaries we may expect to see the list considerably augmented. There is room, to indicate only one line of work, for other such scientific monographs as that of Father Och on the German American farmer.[2]

The general impression gained from the accounts of those who are pioneering social work among the clergy in the various American States is somewhat bewildering. As has been said, the field is so immense and varied that generalisation becomes impossible. The imagination reels before the picture of that enormous country with its babel of nationalities and its perpetual

[1] *Central-Blatt*, August, 1912.

[2] *Der Deutschamerikanische Farmer*, von Dr. Joseph Och (Columbus, Ohio: Waisenfreund). $1.

movement. The wonder is not that the American clergy have done so little in the way of social action, but that they have been able to do so much. Considering the startlingly rapid growth of Catholicism in the United States, one might have supposed that all the energies of the clergy would have been absorbed in building churches and schools and administering the Sacraments. When we remember that in the ecclesiastical Province of San Francisco alone some 700 churches and 175 educational institutions have been built in little more than half a century we have some glimpse of the pressure under which the work has been done. Now that these main wants have been so largely provided for and the clergy are able to turn their attention to concerted social action, we may expect to see some remarkable results.

Indeed the opportunity for effective social work on the part of the clergy in America would seem to be almost without parallel. It is true that they are without State support, but this is perhaps compensated by the fact that they are without State interference. Moreover, they do not live under the chilling shadow of an established church which is not their own. They may have no favour, but at least they have a fair field. Democratic in spirit, enterprising in character, they are "going to the people" with an assurance which is refreshing and is not without justification.

The influence of the Catholic clergy in the shaping of Canada has been beyond all calculation. The French pioneer priests were builders of civilisation as well as missionaries of the Gospel. Tempting as is the story of those early days, it cannot be told here.

As a result of the long and devoted labours of earlier generations of priests the Catholic Church in Canada was able, about the middle of the last century,

to blossom out into its full manifestation and to express itself unhindered in those works of charity and social well-being to which it turns so naturally when the opportunity presents itself.

This period was marked by the arrival of a number of religious communities devoted to charitable works, and by a great temperance crusade (1843) inaugurated by the clergy, which led to the foundation of numerous temperance societies. In 1851 was held the first Council of Quebec, soon followed by the foundation of the Laval University. With the growth of ecclesiastical organisation and the development of Catholic education came an intense spirit of social activity on the part of the clergy. Besides the multitudinous charitable works and the temperance movement referred to, we find priests to the fore in the work of colonisation. The "colonising priest" became a distinct and familiar type, unknown elsewhere: we read of one who devoted his life to the work and founded more than thirty parishes in the Province of Quebec. The position in national life thus gained has never been lost: we are told that priests and religious "still form the majority of deputies and members who attend the annual agricultural congresses at the Trappist Monastery of Notre Dame d'Oka, the colonisation congresses and societies".[1] Several agricultural schools are to-day conducted by ecclesiastics.

We may here note that the whole of Catholic Secondary Education is in the hands of priests.

The Catholic Church in Canada is now divided into eight ecclesiastical provinces with about 3500 priests and a membership of about 2,500,000. Roughly three-fifths of the Catholic population are found in the Province of Quebec. To this Province we may confine

[1] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. Canada.

our attention in speaking of Catholic social work in East Canada.

We note first the amazing abundance of charitable and social works carried on more or less immediately under the direction of the clergy. Of this we have evidence in the annual *Canada Ecclésiastique*. Montreal alone has its *Handbook of Catholic Charitable and Social Works*, published by the Catholic Social Study Guild of that city,[1] which tells how provision is made for every imaginable form of distress, sickness, and degradation. In this work, we are bound to say, religious women figure most prominently and layfolk are represented. Yet directly or indirectly much of the burden falls upon the parish priests.

It is only lately, however, that any considerable attention has been paid by the Catholics of Canada to the wider aspects of social action. Needs have been met as they arose, destitution remedied rather than prevented, spontaneous charity regarded as all-sufficient. There has been, until recently, little in the way of organised social study or concerted attempts to deal with great social problems which if not pressing are at least imminent.

But this need has been felt at last and is being assiduously met by a large section of the clergy. It is interesting to note how the new movement is expressing itself in organisations which aim at promoting the social education of priests and people. Some of these may now be enumerated.

The *Action Social Catholique* in the Archdiocese of Quebec was founded in 1907. It publishes a daily paper (*L'Action Sociale*) and a monthly review (*Le Croisé*) besides a series of pamphlets. Its aim is to promote the formation of various social works throughout the Archdiocese.

[1] P.O. Box 455. Price 20 cents.

A more strictly educational work is the *Ecole Sociale Populaire* of Montreal, founded in 1911. Its aim is to spread throughout all classes of the French-Canadian population a knowledge of Catholic social doctrine (particularly in the matter of labour organisation) and of social action in general. It publishes literature, organises lectures, inspires study circles, and conducts an information bureau. It has taken up the housing question with vigour and has formed a trade union. In 1914 it organised two courses of lectures for the clergy which were delivered by Père Plantier of the *Action Populaire* of Rheims. We may add that a social study club for priests (founded in 1911) meets regularly in the Archbishop's palace at Montreal.

A very important development of Catholic social action in Canada has been the recent introduction of the Diocesan Congresses for social study and work, familiar in other countries. The first assembly of this kind was held in the diocese of Three Rivers in 1912. The Bishop presided and every parish was represented by a priest and three or four laymen. Temperance and tuberculosis were among the subjects discussed. An important Sacerdotal Congress was held at Montreal in 1913. Several of the Bishops have dealt with social questions in their pastoral letters and some of them have been chosen as arbitrators in industrial disputes.

In Canada as elsewhere Catholic priests have made valuable additions to social literature, especially in recent years. We may mention the work of the Abbé Baillarge, *Traité classique d'économie politique, selon la doctrine de Léon XIII. avec applications au Canada* (1892) and the *Catechisme social* (1913) of the Abbé Boivin. Several of the publications of the *Ecole Sociale Populaire* have also been written by priests.

Social science does not appear to be as yet regularly taught in the seminaries as a distinct subject, but conferences and lectures dealing with social subjects are becoming increasingly frequent in those institutions. Thus both at Montreal, in the Jesuit scholasticate, and at Ottawa, in the house of studies of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, social study circles and academies have been organised.[1]

It has been mentioned that the Canadian clergy were very early at work in the two fields of temperance and colonisation. Their efforts in the cause of temperance have been remarkably successful. Temperance societies are numerous and flourishing; and the drink problem, as the result of steady and well-considered action, has been reduced to very small proportions indeed.[2]

The *Missionaires agricoles*, a body of priest lecturers organised by the Bishops of the Province of Quebec, are working hard to introduce more scientific methods of cultivation among the somewhat conservative farmers. Co-operative creameries and associations for the sale of farm produce are growing in favour as a result of experiments encouraged by the clergy. In all this we find a resemblance between the situation in Canada and the co-operative movement in Ireland, which owes, as we have seen, so much of its success to priests.

In the organisation of charitable works, in the promotion of temperance, and in the assisting of agricultural reform the Canadian clergy are merely doing, more scientifically and with improved methods, what has been done by previous generations of priests. But new problems are arising which will tax all the re-

[1] See *Le clergé et les études sociales*, by Père Archambault, S.J.

[2] See the *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1912, p. 108. From this and the two succeeding volumes of the *Year Book* much of the matter in the present chapter has been derived.

sources of Catholics and to the solution of which the enlightened action of the clergy will be indispensable. Industrial tension is spreading from the old world and from the United States to Canada. The disorganisation which has resulted amongst us from the neglect of Catholic social principles is making itself felt in Quebec and Montreal. The labour movement has become contaminated by the alien influences with which we are so familiar. As early as in 1907 it was thought desirable to attempt the formation of Catholic Trade Unions in the Province of Quebec (they would probably be quite impossible elsewhere), and several such Unions are now established with every prospect of success.[1]

The social education of Catholic Trade Unionists, whether members of Catholic Unions or not, has become a matter of urgent necessity, and the Canadian clergy are beginning to see the need of directing it. Study clubs are being formed in large numbers, and this is perhaps the most hopeful feature of the situation. They attract not only the working men but all classes of the population. It is to be hoped that Catholic employers of labour in Canada will take advantage of the opportunities of social education thus offered. They may then avoid what has so often been a stumbling-block to Catholic working men, *viz.* the contrast between the social teaching of the Church and the social practice of local Catholic employers. May we not hope that the wealthier Catholics of Canada, who have distinguished themselves by their generous charity, will show no less generosity in promoting industrial peace by fulfilling their responsibilities as Catholic employers.

[1] For details see the *Catholic Social Year Books for* 1913 and 1914. To the support given by the clergy is also largely due the great success of the popular banks promoted by M. Desjardins.

Turning now to West Canada we find the clergy, insufficient in numbers, confronted with an enormous social task—the securing of the general welfare of the floods of Catholic immigrants. The Church Extension Society is in the field and is doing much good work: Father Casgrain at Quebec devotes himself to the safeguarding of the immigrants from their landing in Canada to their arrival at the settlements. Hostels have been established along the route westwards, and efforts are being made to provide Catholic social organisation in the districts which are being opened up. There is less need to dwell on social work in this part of Canada inasmuch as it is familiar to readers of Catholic newspapers in England, especially in connection with the emigration work of the Catholic Women's League.

Admirable as are the efforts which are being made to meet the new situation which has arisen in Canada, it is clear that an enormous work remains to be done. As Cardinal Bourne pointed out at the Norwich Congress in 1912—

> A new population with amazing growth has come into existence in Canada, the whole situation has changed, and the Church in Canada has to face a responsibility which a few years ago could not have been foreseen. Is not the acceptance of that responsibility part of her divinely given mission, second only in importance to, if it be not even greater than, the earlier mission which she has discharged so nobly?

CHAPTER X.

SOCIAL STUDY IN SEMINARIES.

We have now seen something of the striking activity displayed of recent years by numbers of the clergy on the Continent, in the British Isles, and in America in the field of social work: how this activity has received the warmest approbation of the Holy See and of the Bishops: and how it has proved a very potent means of winning back to Christianity multitudes of working people who had practically given up their religion. In some cases, of course, there has been indiscretion; the younger clergy have allowed themselves to be entangled in social movements which the Holy See has found it necessary to denounce. About these indiscretions something will be said presently. We are here concerned with the social activity of the clergy in so far as it has proceeded on sound lines and won the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities.

The work done by these pioneers has been little short of heroic. The parochial clergy face to face with a new situation have forged new weapons. They have made themselves experts in branches of knowledge into which their seminary professors had not initiated them. Unaided and isolated they have mastered the details of agricultural co-operation or rural banks. They have supplemented their moral theology by treatises on manure. They have added to their

knowledge of the Ecumenical Councils a practical acquaintance with Parish Councils. Besides reading Bulls they have instructed their parishioners in breeding bulls. They have made room on their bookshelves beside the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas for the *Summa Economica* of the *Guide Social*. They have done all this, not because they regarded such matters as a substitute for the catechism or as a new form of apologetic, but because they were thus enabled to get into touch with disaffected parishioners and to give them a Catholic social formation which would take the place of the un-Christian sociology which inevitably reacts upon religious belief and practice.

At first these pioneers, like M. Fonsegrive's *Curé de Campagne*, were regarded as erratic and unclerical. But as time went on and the Bishops approved, their work came to be recognised as normal and even edifying. It was justified by its results—spiritual and temporal. It was seen to spring from supernatual charity and to lead to the frequenting of the Sacraments. It helped to build up the Catholic population into something resembling the religious and social solidarity of the old parishes.

Then came the inevitable question : If it is desirable that some at least of the clergy should take part in social work, how can we avoid the conclusion that it is desirable to give them some interest in, and some general knowledge of, that work before they leave the seminary?

The question was inevitable precisely because social science is so vast and complicated. A busy priest cannot be expected to master it amid the multifarious duties of life on the mission. The pioneers, indeed, did so, but they were heroic. St. Ignatius of Loyola in middle life sat amongst schoolboys and studied Latin grammar. This, too, was heroic ; but

it is no argument for the deferring of classical studies till the age of forty.

Hence there has arisen a considerable amount of discussion as to how far ecclesiastical students should be given definite instruction in economics and social science. Some have deprecated any addition to the traditional subjects taught in the seminaries. Others have urged the establishment of lectures dealing not merely with social principles, but also with the details of social organisation. Midway between these stand the advocates of a somewhat widened curriculum together with facilities for the study of details in the students' spare time.

It may be profitable to consider some of the instructions on this head which have been given from time to time by the Holy See and by the Bishops; we may then proceed to examine the extent to which social study is actually being pursued in various ecclesiastical seminaries.

Pope Leo XIII. in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* made it clear that the social question on account of its moral and religious implications, is one which the priest cannot afford to disregard. It touches his office at many points; and if all the faithful are called upon to help in restoring a Christian social order, the priest by his very mission is expected to take a leading part in the work of restoration. From this it might be concluded that Leo XIII. desired the priest to have such a formation as would fit him for this work. If any doubt remained on this head it would be solved by the words of the Pope himself. Writing to the Bishops of Italy on 8th December, 1902, he said:—

> We desire that, towards the end of their education in the seminaries, the aspirants to the priesthood should be instructed, as is fitting, in the pontifical documents which deal with the social question and with Christian democracy.

By way of adding example to precept Pope Leo XIII. instituted a course of sociology in the Apostolic College for the training of professors and superiors of seminaries which he had instituted by a *motu proprio* of 31st August, 1901. The direction of this course was entrusted by the Pope to Mgr. Radini-Tedeschi. The syllabus is as follows:—

During three successive years the following subjects are studied and lectures given on them twice a week:—

1. *Social organisation.* The origin and the constitutive elements of society, the family, the commune, the State.
2. *Economic organisation.* The production, distribution, and consumption of wealth.
3. *The social question.* The agrarian question, the in-industrial and commercial question, the labour question.

At the German College the Jesuit Fathers have instituted lectures of the same kind. These, however, are less exhaustive, and attendance at them is optional. Other seminaries at Rome or in Italy are taking the same line, and the time is not far off when, after the example of the Leonine College, every Italian seminary will have its professor of social science.[1]

Similarly, Pope Pius X. in his Letter to the Italian Bishops (1905), urges the clergy to interest themselves in social work.

By an effectual propaganda of writings, by stirring oral exhortations and by direct aid let him [the priest] strive to ameliorate within the limits of justice and charity the economic condition of the people, favouring and furthering those institutions that tend in that direction, especially those that propose to marshal the multitudes against the invading domination of socialism, and which at one and the same

[1] Second Congress (July, 1907) of the *Alliance des Grands Séminaires.* Report of the Abbé Tanquerey, p. 64.

time save them from economic ruin and moral and religious demoralisation. In this way the help of the clergy in works of Catholic action aims at a highly religious object, and will never be a hindrance but will even be of assistance to the spiritual ministry, enlarging its sphere and multiplying its fruit.

It is natural to suppose that when the Pope lays upon the clergy a work requiring wide and accurate knowledge, he supposes that some effort will be made during their period of training to prepare them for it. But here, again, we are not left to our own conjectures on the subject. For Pope Pius X. in his memorable letter on the *Sillon* orders the French Hierarchy to secure the provision of trained experts in social science among the clergy.

As the social ranks ought to be organised in such a way that by the natural play of forces they should paralyse the efforts of the wicked and should enable every one of good-will to gain a legitimate share of temporal happiness, We earnestly desire that you should take an active part in the organisation of society for this object. And to this end, whilst your priests will devote themselves with ardour to the work of the sanctification of souls and the defence of the Church and also to works of charity properly so called, you will choose some of them who are active and of thoughtful disposition, who possess doctors' degrees in philosophy and theology, and who are thoroughly acquainted with the history of ancient and modern civilisation, and you will set them to the study, less elevated but more practical, of social science, so that you can place them at the proper time in charge of your Catholic social movement.

Turning now to the encouragement given to social study in seminaries by the Bishops, we find ourselves confronted by an embarrassing wealth of material. It will be sufficient to quote a few examples :—

The Archbishop of Rouen, Mgr. Fuzet, in a letter of

April, 1907, after speaking of the need for the clergy to take an active part in social work, continues:—

> This social action demands preparation. We must know its character, its objects, its methods, the legislation which concerns it. . . .
>
> Now like all our studies, this social study, if it is to be really fruitful, must commence in the seminary. Hence I desire that in the seminary our young clerics should learn that the law of France provides means of relieving the labouring and suffering classes. . . . Let us study this legislation which is Christian despite itself. It will help us, if we know how to make use of it, to accomplish one of the greatest of our duties, the duty of charity.

On 1st January, 1902, Mgr. Deramecourt, Bishop of Soissons, in the course of an address to his seminarians, spoke the following words:—

> The priest is not meant merely to preach in empty churches, to baptise (often too late), to prepare for First Communion as best he can, to administer Extreme Unction to sick people who are already committed to evil. He must get into contact with the people by means of social institutions, by the methods which are in vogue to-day—public meetings and agricultural associations for example. . . . I am glad to know that you devote some time to the study of these new methods under the direction of your teachers. Believe me, whenever you study these subjects in the light of faith and of sound Catholic doctrine, you will draw down the blessing of our Lord and win the approbation of your Bishop.

Similarly Mgr. Touchet, the Bishop of Orleans, in a letter dated 15th September, 1903, on the moral and pastoral formation of his seminary students, insists on the importance of "certain special studies which might appear to be outside the scope of seminary training, but which serve to construct a bridge between the people whom we are to evangelise and ourselves".

He wishes such questions as the following to be introduced into the seminary text-books :—

> The relations of capital and labour, the duties of the employer towards adult workmen, towards child labour, . . . the duties of the workman towards the employer, strikes, etc. . . . I know [continues the Bishop] that our Professor of Moral Theology not unfrequently gives rapid accounts of the legislation which concerns social questions. He does so conscientiously and with authority. Nevertheless it would be an advantage were a specialist, who has been actively engaged for years in this kind of work, to give us the advantage of his practical experience and theoretical knowledge.

The Bishops have not been content with mere instruction in Catholic social principles, but have instituted extremely practical courses of lectures. Thus the Bishop of Mende, in his Lenten pastoral for 1905, expresses his gratification at the lectures on agriculture which had been given for some years past to the students in his seminary, "to enable them to be of greater service to rural populations".

The whole question of social study in seminaries was discussed by Mgr. Delamaire, the Coadjutor Bishop of Cambrai, in an interview reported in the *Figaro* of 1st August, 1907. The initiation of seminarists into social science, he said, was indispensable and inevitable. This science must be acquired in the seminary, since the priest on the mission has not the time to take up such study. The Bishop was strongly of opinion that the students should acquire not only the principles of social science, but some knowledge of existing social organisations, such as co-operative societies and agricultural syndicates. By this means they would be able to teach the people thrift, to check their craving for pleasure, to divert them from bad company. True, co-operative societies did not make people super-

natural: but they were at least a step towards the morality of the Gospels, and the priest must encourage them.[1]

The Bishop of Moulins, in a pastoral letter of 23rd November, 1908, testifies with approbation to the interest taken in social work by his seminarists:—

> For many years past a truly apostolic zeal has inflamed their young and generous hearts; a magnificent impulse has been given to the work, and the diocesan authorities do all in their power to encourage it. Appropriate lectures, special conferences, the study of practical text-books, the example of devoted workers—all these means are employed in order that the priests may be able to give useful directions to their people instead of remaining indifferent to their needs, their interests, and the vital questions which absorb and agitate them.

So far the Bishops of France. Their encouragements have been quoted at some length (the list might be continued almost indefinitely), because there appears to be some misapprehension as to the attitude of the French Bishops towards social study in seminaries. The unfortunate aberrations of the *Sillon* which caused the Bishops so much anxiety and finally drew down upon that movement the condemnation of the Holy See, seem to have blinded some to the fact that quite apart from the *Sillon* there has long been in the French seminaries a considerable amount of social study, initiated and encouraged by the Bishops themselves and regarded at Rome with entire approbation. That a number of young French seminarists should have allowed themselves to be entangled in Sillonist errors was doubly unfortunate: for not only has it sent these ecclesiastics off the lines, but it has provoked a certain amount of nervous suspicion with

[1] The whole interview repays study. See *Actes Episcopaux: France*, published by *Action Populaire*.

regard to seminary study clubs and other institutions which have the warmest encouragement of ecclesiastical authorities and are producing a vast amount of good. Some of the English newspapers gravely informed us that the Pope in condemning the *Sillon* condemned democracy; in like manner there are those who see in the Pope's letter a condemnation of the social study introduced by the Bishops into seminaries all over the world and approved by the Holy See.

It would be impossible to quote episcopal documents on this subject from all countries; but we must be allowed to recall just one of the utterances of the Bishops of Spain—a country where, if we are to believe the English press, the clergy are entirely out of touch with modern questions.

The Bishop of Madrid, in a pastoral instruction on the study of sociology in his seminary (7th November, 1906), writes as follows :—

> If the priest were not bound by virtue of his very mission to adapt himself to the exigencies of the times and to exercise this social activity which has been so luminously set forth by the Sovereign Pontiffs, there would be no need to prepare him by means of social study. . . .
>
> It has been our wish that this study should concentrate round the following points :—
>
> 1. The more pressing social problems, that is to say, the problems to which we must find a remedy.
>
> 2. The principles and organisations with which Catholicism supplies us in order to solve those problems or to pave the way for their solution.

It need scarcely be said that the Bishops, who in all parts of the world are encouraging social study in their seminaries, lay great stress upon the need of basing those studies upon the sciences of theology and philosophy which must always form the staple of the priest's education. There is of course some danger

lest impulsive and generous-hearted young students throw themselves into the interesting study of social conditions and methods of reform with a zeal which may prejudice their philosophical and theological studies. Many minds find so much that is attractive in the study of concrete social institutions that they may relax their efforts to master branches of knowledge which may sometimes appear to be speculative and unpractical. The Marcionite heresy may appear dull and out of date as compared with the Marxian error. The Waldenses may pale in interest before the Webbs. The Minority Report may prove more attractive reading than Migne's *Patrology*. The Holy Father and the Bishops have frequently warned seminary students against allowing themselves, in their zeal for social study, to drift into a temper of mind which undervalues or even disparages the fundamental studies upon which all sound and fruitful Catholic social study must rest. The results of neglecting these warnings are seen in the disastrous aberrations which have occurred of recent years among individuals and groups of the clergy on the Continent.

It will be noted that the Holy Father in his letter on the *Sillon* lays particular stress on the need of basing the social study of ecclesiastics upon a thorough course of Catholic theology and philosophy. The wisdom of such direction will be apparent even to the thoughtful student of social history who is not a Catholic. For he will be bound to admit the enormous contribution made by the Catholic Church in all ages to the temporal as well as to the spiritual welfare of society; and he will be forced to admit further that the beneficent social action of the Church has sprung immediately from her theological and philosophical tenets. Heresy has ever been socially unfruitful, and the Catholic who suffers his keen appreciation of

Catholic truth to grow dim is to that extent losing his hold on the most powerful instrument of social regeneration.

But let us now examine some of the methods of social study which are in vogue in ecclesiastical seminaries on the Continent. If we select our examples chiefly from France, it is partly for the reason given above, and partly because the French, with their love for systematic "Reports" of all their various activities, have provided us with more convenient sources of information than can be found in other countries. We may be content to follow, for the most part, two excellent pamphlets entitled *L'Initiation des Seminaristes aux Études et aux Œuvres sociales*, by P. Joseph Tustes.[1]

There are two obvious methods of imparting social instruction in seminaries: the one consists of formal lectures delivered by the professors, the other of study clubs, attendance at which is as a rule voluntary. To these may be added special lectures delivered by externs.

There are said to be forty-five seminaries in France in which social study has been definitely organised.

In some dioceses the Bishops have established courses of lectures on pastoral social work. Thus at Cambrai lectures are given to the students of the second and third years of Theology on the various associations—educational, recreative, charitable, economic, and so forth—which conduce to the welfare of a parish.

In a large number of seminaries special lectures are given on social questions. Thus at Arras the Bishop in 1903 commissioned the Abbé Hoguet to give courses of lectures extending over three years on the Family, Professional Organisation, and the State.

[1] Published by *l'Action Populaire*, Rheims.

At Périgueux we hear of a course of agriculture given to the seminarists by experts; the instructions are given in the country on holidays and are very practical. At Soissons there are lectures on horticulture. The seminary at Cambrai sends some of its students for a year's training to the agricultural college of La Louvière in Belgium: on their return they assist the two agricultural missionaries of the diocese.

Besides these regular lectures on social subjects we also find in a great number of seminaries various types of study clubs or conferences. These have received the most cordial encouragement of Superiors, who regard them as "a most useful complement to the ordinary lectures". A large amount of literature has been published on the subject of study clubs in seminaries, including text-books, suggested courses of reading, lists of subjects for discussion, and so forth.

These Continental study clubs are generally under the direction of one of the professors, who, however, is advised to resist the temptation to turn them into lectures. As the Superior of one of the French seminaries writes, it is better that he should let one of the students preside and content himself with preventing the discussions from going off the lines. The same writer adds that attendance at such meetings should be optional; it is better to confine them to an *élite* among the students with whose normal studies they are less likely to interfere.

These conferences, which were first established at Saint-Sulpice in 1871, have now spread to all or nearly all the seminaries in France. The success of these gatherings has led to the formation of similar societies among the parochial clergy, which in some cases publish pamphlets and periodicals.

At Bordeaux the seminarians edit and cyclostyle their *Bulletin de la Conférence Léon XIII.*, with the ap-

proval of the Superiors, who hold that "it is better to develop initiative than to cultivate inertia"—an observation of undoubted truth and wide application.

The methods adopted by a large number of these study clubs are described in the two pamphlets of *l'Action Populaire* already alluded to. In all cases one notes the keen initiative of the students and the practical nature of their work. Thus in the study club started by the Bishop in the seminary at Versailles the students are told to prepare, not high-sounding dissertations on the means of saving the working classes, but modest accounts of real living organisations of which they themselves have had experience.

The organisation of social studies in the seminaries of Spain has made immense progress during the last few years.[1] The pioneers of the movement were Father Vicent and Father Gandàsegui who, towards the end of the last century, gave a few lectures on social subjects to the seminarists at Valentia and Saragossa respectively. The seminary at Toledo may claim to have established the first chair of social science (1901), but other seminaries followed suit in rapid succession. There were thirteen such chairs in existence in 1904, thirty-nine in 1908, fifty-one in 1911. At present every seminary is obliged to have courses of lectures on social science, or "sociology" as it is called in most cases.

At Majorca no less than nine hours a week are given to these lectures, but about four hours a week would seem to be the average time allotted to them. In twenty-seven seminaries the lectures are given during the theology course only, in six during the philosophy only, in six during the canon law course, and in five during a more extended period.

[1] See *Mouvement Social*, June, 1911.

The text-book selected is generally that by Llovera or Biederlack or Le Soc (Jimenez).

The other authors most in favour, besides St. Thomas and Leo XIII., are as follows :—

German—Hitze, Cathrein, Ketteler, Hertling, Meyer.

Austrian—Biederlack, Weiss, Costa-Rossetti.

Italian—Toniolo, Passavich, Ballerini, Rossignoli, Cossa.

American—Ryan, Ward.

English—Devas.

French—Antoine, Goyau, Turmann, Garriguet, Leroy-Beaulieu.

Spanish—Llovera, Le Soc, Vicent, Chaves Arias, Castroviejo, Chalbaud, Casanova.

At Valladolid alone there are lectures on pure sociology—the authors read including Ward and Benjamin Kidd. Elsewhere a more practical course of social economy is preferred. Social problems and social institutions are studied in detail.

The seminarists supplement their social education by means of study clubs, special lectures, the preparation of monographs, and investigations carried on during the vacations under the direction of the parish priests. The Bishops send some of the young priests to University lectures on social subjects—though as a matter of fact the Church is far ahead of the State in the matter of organising the study of social science.

It would have been interesting to examine the provision which is made for social study in the seminaries of other countries on the Continent. Space, however, only allows the briefest of notes. In Belgium there are special courses of lectures on sociology at the seminaries of Malines, Ghent, Namur, and Tournai, and possibly in others as well. In Germany, as is well known, the clergy are in close touch with social movements, and their ecclesiastical education is such

as to fit them for the prominent part which they are expected to take in the social life of the country.

As this chapter is only concerned with social study in seminaries there is no need to raise the question of social work in seminaries. Such work must, from the nature of the case, be limited in scope ; yet it is interesting to see how much active part the Continental seminarists often take in *patronages* and similar institutions. Advantage is also taken of the long vacations for organised social work. It need scarcely be pointed out that the methods of social study in vogue in foreign seminaries by no means lend themselves to exact reproduction in this country. Our clergy differ very considerably from their brethren (for example) in France. The difference extends not merely to such matters as numerical strength, methods of work, and conditions of life, but also to temperament, social influence, relations with civil authorities, and status generally. The opportunities of the clergy in the two countries differ considerably. To take but one instance, France is an agricultural country where small farms abound ; whereas in England there is little scope for the social activities of such "country vicars" as M. Fonsegrive's hero. On the other hand, the Catholic priest in this country may have opportunities of social work open to him which are seldom within reach of the French Curé.

The object of this chapter, therefore, is not to suggest that the social studies pursued in continental seminaries might be introduced point for point among our own Church students. For the studies of a seminary will be conditioned by the needs and opportunities which will confront the students in after-life, and these, as has just been said, differ very considerably on the two sides of the Channel. Nevertheless, there is much to be gained from a careful

study of foreign methods, as the following considerations may show.

In the first place, it provides us with an answer to the objections which are sometimes urged against social activity on the part of the clergy on the score that it is unpriestly, and leads to a depreciation of sacerdotal dignity. For such an argument can best be met, not by *à priori* considerations, but by pointing to a large number of concrete instances. Is it or is it not a fact that the social activity of Catholic priests on the Continent has brought back whole parishes to the frequentation of the Sacraments? Do the "agricultural missionaries" of the Diocese of Cambrai increase or diminish by their social work the respect in which they are held by the people? Does the interest taken by the German parish priest in social reform tend to lower his parishioner's appreciation of the supernatural? The tree has been planted long enough to enable us to judge of it by its fruits.

Again, the social activity of the continental clergy (including the organisation of social studies in seminaries) has not been out of all relation to the opinions and the desires of ecclesiastical superiors. We have seen how in numerous instances the initiative has been taken by the Pope or the Bishops. In other cases the authorities have encouraged spontaneous efforts, and given a cordial sanction to experiments. True, the whole matter is a difficult one, and there have been mistakes and exaggerations. Superiors have sometimes found it their duty to restrain as well as to stimulate. But we may safely say that the history of the movement on the Continent during recent years is a sufficient reply to those who deprecate social studies in seminaries on the score that it is contrary to the spirit of the Church.

And finally, a study of what is being done abroad

cannot fail, in spite of natural differences, to be suggestive as well as reassuring. General methods may be adopted and hints gathered, especially from districts where the conditions more nearly resemble our own.

Before passing on to consider the opportunities for social study provided in English seminaries, it will be interesting to see how the matter is regarded in America. By way of illustration, we may select a conference held at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Catholic Educational Association (Cincinnati, Ohio) in July, 1908. Papers were read by the Rev. William J. Kerby, Ph.D., and the Rev. John Ryan, D.D., on the study of social questions in the seminary, and these papers were followed by a discussion.

Dr. Kerby, while fully recognising the heavy demands already made upon the seminarian's time, does not hesitate to plead for the addition to the faculty of every seminary of a specialist in social science. To objections as to the extent of the difficulties, he replies by pointing to the extent of the need :—

> The social and spiritual leadership of the priesthood is at stake. Pope Leo recognised it : we see proof of it every day. In our industrial centres to-day the priest must understand the issues raised by socialism, labour unions, methods in charity, labour legislation, reform movements. If he does not, he ceases to be a leader. If he would have information, understanding, and method, his seminary course must prepare him for the work.

Dr. Kerby is of opinion that, the services of such an expert being once secured, social studies might be introduced into a seminary "easily, gradually, and with profit". For there need be no attempt to give every student a specialised training in social sciences.

Undoubtedly there are to be found in every seminary some students of superior ability with a taste for social sciences. These students meet the demands of the curriculum with relative ease. Might not they form the nucleus of a serious class in social studies whose members would do first-rate work? And might not numbers of them find it possible to get a University course after ordination and take degrees? Half a dozen such issuing every year from our seminaries would quickly give us a body of thinkers and writers in social lines whose influence in the body of the clergy would be marked.

With regard to this last suggestion it may be noted that it has been endorsed by the Holy Father in his recent letter on the *Sillon*, and that several American Bishops have taken to sending some of their clergy to München-Gladbach for a course of social studies.

As regards the larger body of seminarians, Dr. Kerby thinks that they should at least be given such general instruction and training as would enable them to "use sources intelligently and recognise their limitations sensibly".

Principles of social investigation, questions of method, of observation, classification, and interpretation of social facts; information on the nature, constitution, and content of movements like socialism, labour unions, reform legislation, discussion of methods and problems of charity, might be taken up with great advantage.

Dr. Ryan deals with the question in a broader way, and much of his paper is concerned with the importance of economic motives in human action and the value of an economic and social training to the priest.

The importance to the clergy of an understanding of our social problems will increase with the inevitable increase of the problems themselves. Therefore the priest of the future should be equipped to deal intelligently with these problems from the very outset of his ministry. To this end

he should receive in the seminary an amount of social instruction which will be fundamental and scientific: which will be sufficiently extensive to make him acquainted with the vital facts of current social conditions, tendencies, and doctrines; which will be sufficiently stimulating to give him a lasting interest in these phenomena; and which will be sufficiently thorough to enable him to deal intelligently, justly, and charitably with the practical situations that he will be compelled to face afterwards.

Dr. Ryan proceeds to give an interesting account of the manner in which Economic History and Political Economy are taught in the provincial seminary of St. Paul:—

The object of the discussion of economic history is to give some account of the Gild system and of the economic life of the Middle Ages generally, to trace the origin and development of the present industrial order, and to show the bearing of economic institutions upon the life and thought of their particular age. The object of the course in economics is to describe in outline the forces and influences which actually govern the production, exchange, distribution, and consumption of material goods. . . . Six years' experience seems to indicate that the allotment of so much time to social topics has not been detrimental to the course of instruction in Moral Theology.

This last observation is reassuring. It is a welcome addition to the evidence (already sufficiently abundant) that social study may be keenly prosecuted in seminaries without prejudice to the philosophical and theological course. Were this not the case such study would stand self-condemned. The matter was well put by one of the speakers at the American Conference:—

I think what we want more than ever in this country and at this time is a good, sound grasp of philosophical and theological principles. If the seminarian is not able to

supply these principles when he comes out, all his kindergarten training in various branches of knowledge will be useless.

There is, as has been pointed out, a real danger here. The "actuality" of social studies may easily tempt the young ecclesiastic to wander from the more austere paths of theology. Yet, on the other hand, such studies, if wisely directed and controlled, may impart a new freshness to what might otherwise appear arid and academic. They may help to give body and content to the formulas of the schools, to illustrate principles, and to supply a background of interest and an inspiring motive for thorough and intelligent work. Take, for instance, the treatise on ethics. Some knowledge of the actual problems presented by Trade Unionism, Sweating, Poor Law Reform movements, Trusts and Pools, and the like, will make our ethical principles at the same time more luminous and more interesting. The student will be driven back upon them, will ponder over them, and apply them not because he wishes to pass an examination, but because he wishes to assimilate them as a necessary condition for dealing with concrete problems which will confront him all his life. Similarly with regard to theology. The student will be the better able to appreciate the magnificent cohesion, the satisfying completeness, the solidity and harmony of Catholic theology if he is able in some measure to appreciate its bearings upon modern needs and current aspirations. He will realise that he is mastering a science which will stand him in good stead. It is not a question of drawing off energy from these fundamental studies or lessening the esteem in which they are held. It is a question of supplying an additional motive for mastering them and of emphasising their importance. Devotion to the text-book is shown to

increase rather than diminish when supplemented by a wisely controlled course of social study; for the text-book thus supplemented is regarded no longer as a fetish for the placation of examiners, but as an invaluable ground plan for the edifice of well-wrought and accurate knowledge.

This suggests another consideration. It is not difficult to secure hard work among seminary students during their period of training. But it is said to be extremely difficult to "inculcate an effective incentive for continued study," to quote the words of an American Vicar-General.

> Is it not a painful fact [he adds] that for a considerable number of young priests the definition of *sacerdotium* reads something like this: *Finis studiorum?* The distinctively ecclesiastical branches of seminary study are so charming and so sublime in their nature, so varied and numerous in their sources, and so infinite in their extent, that it cannot but seem strange that a young priest should be so anxious to shelve his books and bid a joyful farewell to his studies after his ordination.

In other words, the mastery of the text-book should be regarded not as the completion of the theological edifice, but the laying of the foundation for a process of building which is to continue through life. Hence the need of an abiding interest which will save the student from shutting up his books with a vigorous and vindictive slam as soon as his tutelage is over. Such interest would seem to be supplied in some measure by a sensitive alertness to current social problems.

To secure such an abiding interest it is not necessary to cover all the ground in detail or to multiply formal lectures on social subjects. What is wanted is a grasp of principles, an alertness of mind, a general

knowledge of social tendencies, and some acquaintance with methods and sources. It would be preposterous to expect a seminary to supply a completed training in social science. The thing could not be done without prejudice to more important studies. But something may be done to start the students on lines which they can prosecute afterwards, and to give them a sense both of the importance and the vastness of the subject. To get them to realise their own limitations will be more profitable than to give them the impression that they have learnt all they need ever know on the subject.

We may now consider what is actually being done and projected in the way of social study in our own seminaries in England. The matter is of general interest to all Catholics, for a knowledge of the facts will provide us with an answer to those who declare that seminary training is antiquated and useless, and that it does little to prepare men for the actual problems of life.

It should be said that the following pages are based upon information kindly supplied to the writer by the Superiors of several of our larger ecclesiastical seminaries, both secular and regular. No attempt is made to give a complete account of the work which is being done; it has seemed sufficient to select a few typical examples. It need scarcely be added that the present chapter has not been written for the purpose of advising the Superiors of seminaries as to how they should conduct the establishments of which they are in charge. Its purpose is merely to collect in a convenient form the information which they themselves have supplied and the suggestions which they have made.

That there is need for social study in English seminaries no less than in those of the Continent is

the deliberate conviction of those who have the best right to speak on the subject.

To my mind [writes the Superior of a diocesan seminary] there can be no doubt about the importance of our young priests having thought out, systematically and under proper guidance, the social problems which the mass of their people have to face. It is not merely that a sympathetic and intelligent interest in these subjects will give them an influence with their flocks which they can use for supernatural ends, but that the Church has a message, and the people expect the priest to tell them what it is. And in delivering it he must inspire confidence. The people are quite ready to look upon him as a leader, but he must deserve the position by a competent and compelling knowledge of the questions at issue.

The actual methods of social study which are followed in our seminaries may be conveniently grouped under the following heads:—

(*a*) Formal lectures as part of the ordinary course.
(*b*) Occasional lectures by externs.
(*c*) Organised studies as part of the ordinary course.
(*d*) Study clubs, debating clubs, and essay societies (voluntary).
(*e*) Private study encouraged by Superiors. Use of social libraries, etc.
(*f*) Practical work, especially during vacations.

(*a*) The amount of time which is given to formal lectures as part of the ordinary course is largely conditioned by the total length of the course. Thus, where three years are allotted to philosophy, more can be done in this way. A couple of examples will suffice.

At one seminary a special course of lectures (an hour a week for two years) has been instituted for the philosophy students. It follows to a considerable extent the main lines of Père Antoine's admirable *Cours*

d'Economie Sociale. At another, the lectures on "Special Ethics" are made to include not only the examination and refutation of socialism, but also some account of present social evils and suggested remedies. These lectures are given daily, last for an hour, and extend over three or four months. Among the subjects treated are those of Unemployment, the Minimum Wage, Small Holdings, the Poor Law, and Poverty in towns.

In both these cases the formal lectures are supplemented by papers read by the students, about which something will be said presently.

Hence we find two types of social lecture courses in our seminaries. The one is a development of the "Special Ethics" course, and the lectures are given daily for a few months; the other is a more independent course, lectures being given once a week for a year or two. There is much to be said in favour of each of these methods, and we need not enter upon the reasons which may make one of them more suitable in a particular instance. But stress may be laid once more upon the fact that these social lectures have a structural place in the philosophical and theological curriculum, and that the success which attends them contributes to the interest and thoroughness with which the course as a whole is assimilated. Similarly, the students who profit most by these social lectures are those who have the firmest grasp of philosophical and theological principles.

(*b*) Occasional lectures are given in several seminaries by experts who are not members of the staff. Such lectures are found to be useful in creating interest, suggesting new points of view, or conveying specialised knowledge somewhat off the beaten track. Mr. Norman Potter, for instance, has frequently lectured to Catholic seminarians, and his wide knowledge, keen enthusiasm,

and sympathetic manner have never failed to make a deep impression. It seems probable that in view of the vast extent of social science, its importance for Catholics, and the difficulty of providing each seminary with experts, even more advantage may be taken in the future from this system of occasional lectures. In cases where the course is not long enough to allow time for much in the way of regular lectures on social subjects, these periodic social *fervorinos* may do much to create an interest which will bear fruit later on.

(*c*) With regard to organised studies as part of the ordinary course, we find in our seminaries a great variety of excellent methods, some of which might be adopted with considerable profit by groups of lay-students.

Thus at one seminary the "philosophers" are called upon to produce papers on special questions of practical interest. Among these are the following:—

Poverty (based on Rowntree and W. Reason in the Aldine series).
Unemployment (based on Beveridge).
Sweating (based on Clementina Black).
History of Poor Law Legislation.
Present position of the Poor Law.
Housing.
Catholic social work abroad.

These papers are read during the ordinary lecture time, and are followed by a discussion under the direction of the professor.

At other seminaries a similar method of reading papers is in vogue. In one case at least these papers take the form of popular addresses, and care is taken to strip them as far as possible of technical phraseology or academic expressions. Hence they become an excellent preparation for public speaking, and teach the student how to translate his scientific knowledge into the simplest and most effective terms.

(*d*) Even more variety is found in the study clubs, debating clubs, and essay societies which are to be found in all seminaries. Here there is much scope for initiative among the students themselves, and the results secured have been eminently satisfactory. In some cases it has been found advisable to establish more than one study club; two or three such clubs, each of eight or ten members, appears to be a better arrangement than one large one.

In this matter of study clubs the need of guidance becomes apparent. In some cases this is secured by the presence of a professor; in others Superiors prefer to leave the students to conduct their own meetings. Most of the seminary study clubs are connected with the *Catholic Social Guild*—a society which has met with the warmest welcome from directors of seminaries, and which serves as a centre of reference in social study for the various seminaries, and has secured the collaboration of a number of seminary professors.

(*e*) With regard to private study we learn that the seminaries are as a rule well equipped with social literature, and that encouragement is given to those students who may find time to prosecute social study on their own account. It is found that much good may be done by professors who take opportunities of interesting individual students in social topics on walks or recreation days, and who stimulate such interest by the judicious loan of books. It may be added that in two or three seminaries students present the subject of economics for University examinations, and there is some prospect of others being sent, after ordination, to Louvain, or elsewhere, for a course of sociology. This, as has been seen, would be in accordance with the wishes of the Holy Father.

(*f*) There are many difficulties in the way of active social work on the part of seminarians, and the sub-

ject scarcely comes within the scope of this chapter save in its bearing on study. Something may, of course, be done during vacations, and any practical knowledge of social conditions thus gained—say in helping the parish priest to run a club, or by visiting a settlement, a garden city, a slum, etc.—will give freshness and point to subsequent social study. In this connection we may quote some words of the Very Rev. Dr. Dyer:—

> I think some students who are particularly interested in social work and have sound sense—not faddists or seekers of novel experiences—might, under the guidance of an expert in social science, make concrete studies of social conditions and the men and organisations that are trying to transform them. They might, for instance, see the conditions under which men work, or have some labour leader explain the aims of his organisation. This would give them an initiation in such matters, and when they go out I think it would prove very helpful to them in later years.

One suggestion may be mentioned which has reached us from two seminaries. A very profitable as well as a healthy and interesting hobby for a seminarian in his spare time is that of horticulture. Any practical experience which he may acquire may stand him in very good stead later on. There is a marked movement in the direction of cottage gardens (we remember how in France the clergy have been pioneers here), intensive gardening, garden allotments, garden classes, and the like. A priest who had acquired some knowledge of these matters might find in them a means of bringing his people together in little undertakings which would brighten their lives, widen their interests, and increase their resources. Garden allotments outside our large towns might prove quite as effective as billiards in saving Catholic youths from loafing, and they would

have the additional advantage of inspiring enterprise, self-reliance, and industry.[1]

[1] In one of our seminaries there is considerable horticultural activity, and much use is made of "The Agricultural and Horticultural Association," better known as the "One and All". This excellent Society (92 Long Acre, London, W.C.), which has been established for over forty years, is doing a great work for horticulture in this country. It has issued nearly three million publications in the course of this year, and its information bureau is invaluable. With such guidance the seminarian who is interested in horticulture may be sure of employing his time to the best advantage. The subscription for Associates is 5s. a year.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRIEST AND SOCIAL STUDY.

THE Catholic priest, as we have seen, has unique opportunity for social action. He possesses an unrivalled knowledge of the deepest needs of the poor. He enjoys the confidence of his people and can make just that intimate appeal which carries conviction. He is known to be disinterested, and a word from him is commonly more effective than all the persuasions of a philanthropic visitor. His experience and his office combine to make him the trusted adviser, even in temporal matters, of those to whom he has brought spiritual strength in the great crises of their lives.

Yet the sacred office and the wide experience do not suffice of themselves to equip the priest for that social mission which we have seen to be so closely connected with his spiritual work. His experience has to be brought into relation with the experience of others, with history, with economics, with sociology, as well as with theology, the law of the Church and philosophy. Without some measure of social study the priest will either succumb to a feeling of helplessness in face of social problems or else waste his energies by repeating the mistakes of others.

There is no doubt that the priest's professional studies give him a peculiar advantage in the tackling of social problems. They provide him not only with the requisite theological basis, but with social principles

of a more or less general nature which may be compared to a ground plan. It might be thought that the experience gained under the exceptionally favourable conditions of mission work would suffice to complete the edifice of social knowledge. But recent history shows that it is not so. The clergy of many lands found that the combination of seminary learning with traditional mission practice did not avail to deflect the social currents. Congregations dwindled and secularism grew rampant. So the clergy have turned their attention to the social roots of the growing religious evil, and have taken to serious and concerted social study. The result has been no loss of dignity, no lowering of supernatural standards, but rather an added prestige and the discovery of fresh opportunities of winning back the people to God.

These fresh opportunities are of many kinds. In many cases we see priests enabled by their social study to reclaim their people from a demoralising destitution by suggesting wise methods of self-help or by directing attention to public channels of aid which had been overlooked by the Catholics though used to advantage by others. Elsewhere we find the clergy showing the more prosperous members of their congregations how to ease social pressure without pauperising others by indiscriminate almsgiving. Here again we find them working together to construct sound schemes of social reform which win the approval even of those who have little sympathy with Catholic dogma. We see them moulding public opinion by the publication of literature which embodies scientific study together with the fruits of practical experience. We see them retaining the ardent spirits who, goaded by legalised injustice, are tempted to bolt to the socialist ranks;—men who would not be retained by vague tirades against Socialism, but who will rally to the standard of

Catholic social reform. These priests are gathering about them the flower of the Catholic intellect, the marrow of the Catholic strength. You may see it at a congress of the *Action Populaire*, or at a gathering of the *Volksverein*. They are "directing the aspirations of economic democracy". You may see a Belgian abbé organising the agriculture of his country, or a German priest curbing the power of the money-lender.

In this connection may be quoted some striking words addressed by the Bishop of Châlons to his priests in a letter of convocation to the "social days" arranged for the clergy:—

> Each of us must ask himself this question: Have I a clear idea of the social teaching of Catholicism? Am I thoroughly imbued with the Pontifical directions which prescribe for Catholics the manner in which they are to apply the eternal Gospel to the circumstances of the time? The Catholic idea cannot be a force and a source of energy unless it is clear.
>
> To this first question another must be added. Have I carefully studied the bold tactics of the enemy and their machinations against the flock which I have to defend? Have I any precise notion of the experiments which may have been made by other priests in circumstances similar to my own?. . . As soon as we begin to examine ourselves in this matter we shall realise the deplorable gaps in our social knowledge, theoretical and practical. . . .
>
> It would give me the keenest satisfaction to see you coming in large numbers to initiate yourselves in the study of new problems, to train yourselves to activities unknown in your younger days, to get instructed in branches of knowledge which formed no part of your ecclesiastical education."[1]

The amount of social work done by Catholic priests in England is very considerable. It is not of a kind

[1] From the Report of the Inter-federal Congress held at Fayt, 4th July, 1911.

which reveals itself in reports and newspaper eulogies. Mr. Charles Booth, for instance, notes that "the paucity of printed matter concerning the work of the Roman Catholic churches in London is very noticeable when compared with that available for other religious bodies". Yet the heavy daily work of our mission priests gives not only spiritual but material support to a vast multitude, including the very poorest classes which no other religious body could reach. We have to remember, too, the enormous strain which is put upon our clergy.

> The Roman Catholic Church [writes Mr. Masterman] is doing heroic work among the very poorest. . . . But the Roman Catholic Church is too hopelessly submerged by the mere weight of numbers to be any effective influence beyond the limits of its own immediate adherents. Its priests are few and hard driven: its regular orders show a singular disinclination to throw themselves into work in the congested districts. The lay element is almost completely absent.

Hence it might seem both impertinent and ironical to suggest that our already overburdened clergy should turn their attention to social study. "Where," it will be replied, "is the time to come from?"

The difficulty is a serious one. Yet, seeing that much of the priest's time is already devoted to social work, it is possible that some measure of concerted study would result in a real economy of time. Mr. Booth implies that there is a distressing absence of permanence in the results effected by the social influence of the clergy on their poorer flocks, and that the root causes of the trouble are not really touched.

> It is said that the voice of the priest or the presence of the sister will quell any disorder; but the trouble recurs. I do not go so far as to say that the same quarrel breaks out again so soon as priest or sister has gone; at any rate,

the occasions repeat themselves. Savagery is checked; but there is no sign of permanent improvement. Drinking and fighting are the ordinary conditions of life among many of their flock, and the streets in which they dwell show it.

It has been suggested that much of the time spent by priests in lugging men out of public-houses or stopping street fights might be saved were they to organise methods for diminishing the occasions which called for such activity. The roots of the evil lie deep down, and their investigation is no easy task.

The same might be said of the demands which are made on the priest's time and purse by members of his flock who seek temporary relief. As Mrs. Crawford writes in her interesting book, *Switzerland To-day* :—[1]

In most countries an undue proportion of the work of the Church has to be devoted to the mere relief of distress, to almsgiving in a more or less organised fashion, in other words, to palliating abnormal and unhealthy conditions of natural life. Some measure of such work is no doubt everywhere needful—disease and destitution can never be wholly wiped out—but in some lands at present it is necessary on so gigantic a scale that it tends to overshadow everything else and to cripple mere spiritual developments. The Church becomes in the eyes of many a mere machinery for the relief of distress, a society with which individuals are apt to claim membership mainly for what they can get from it.

Again the spiritual activity of the priest is crippled by the harassing material needs of his people. His time is taken up with the furnishing of tables. This necessity grows evermore urgent and absorbing, and it is not easy for him to take a wide view of the problem, to investigate the roots of the evil, to work for their extermination. A desperate effort to relieve

[1] Sands. 1s.

pressing wants conceals the fact that such relief may but increase the burden. Where is it all to end? The danger is recognised by many, and it is becoming more and more apparent that when the immense social influence of the clergy is directed towards constructive work based on a well-considered plan, the result is a vast economy of energy. Social study leads to the saving of time—and souls.

Nor is social study valuable merely as giving the best direction to the social work effected directly by the priest himself. It enables him to make full use of the social energy—potential or kinetic—of individual Catholics, of Catholic organisations, of various non-Catholic associations, of municipal and national bodies. Some training in social science may enable a priest to direct activities which he might otherwise be tempted to disregard or to block; it will give him an influence with individuals and societies which may indefinitely facilitate and extend his spiritual mission. Thus the time devoted to social study by the clergy of Belgium has been amply repaid.

Finally, the priest's social studies may enable him not merely to guide his own social action and that of others to the best advantage, but to promote the social formation of the Catholic laity—a formation which in this country is a pressing necessity of the times. Here, again, the urgency of the demand is apt to be obscured by the pre-occupations of material relief: yet the Catholic body will be landed in a social *impasse* unless the clergy look to the Catholic social training of the laity. To quote the Bishop of Northampton:—[1]

> Crag climbers and other venturesome spirits, knowing the dangers of their enterprise, adopt the precaution of roping themselves together. Implicit obedience to ecclesiastical

[1] *The Church and Social Reformers.* C.S.G. Pamphlets, No. 11. C.T.S. 1d.

guidance is the equivalent safeguard for those who attempt the perilous paths of social reform.

This duty of submission to guidance on the part of the laity would seem to involve the duty of providing guidance on the part of the clergy. But we are not left to our own conjectures on the subject, for Rome has made it clear that such guidance should be provided—and by guidance is not meant mere repression but initiative. Not only is lay indiscretion to be tempered, but lay apathy (a more common complaint) is to be exercised.

Opportunities abound. Much use may be made of existing machinery, such as men's clubs, associations, institutes, and the like, which will lose none of their attractiveness or efficiency by being employed as instruments of social education. Indeed, the lecture or paper or debate on social subjects may prove more effective than the billiard-board or the whist-table in securing the permanent interest of the members. It was not by an appeal to the instinct for amusement that the Socialist movement grew.

Here we strike upon a matter of immense importance which has not been sufficiently considered by Catholics in this country. It is a psychological matter and lies at the root of half our religious and social problems. Failure to grasp it leads to enormous waste of a priest's time and trouble, to disappointment, and to a hopeless acquiescence in failure.

Let us begin by considering some typical cases of blindness to psychological laws. We may then examine the laws themselves and some of their applications. Thirdly, we may consider the bearing of these laws on social study.

We often hear laments as to the apathy of the laity in religious matters. The apathy may be put down to "increasing worldliness" or to "the decay of the

spirit of faith". The working lads will not come to Mass: the men will not come to Benediction: the women will not look after the spiritual welfare of their children: parish meetings of various kinds are poorly attended—the club is a failure, the temperance society a farce. In many parishes, of course, and in whole districts, there is no trouble of this kind. Those who are fortunate enough to live in such favoured spots will think this picture exaggerated, but many others will sadly endorse it.

Often enough these failures are not due to any lack of hard work on the part of the clergy. "We have done everything!" they will say, "but the forces pulling against us are irresistible. We have tried clubs, brigades, whist-drives, as well as missions and special sermons, guilds, confraternities, and sodalities. The bulk of the people are not drawn by any of these things. They don't care."

Discouragement is almost pardonable. To have "tried everything" and to have failed does not seem to leave much room for optimism.

Yet has everything really been tried? Has not something been forgotten? Has there not been, perhaps, running through all the strenuous effort, a failure to recognise the nature of the adverse forces?

Now these forces may roughly be divided into two —material and mental. Many people have no interest in their religion because they can have no interest in anything. They are ground down by a desperate poverty which cripples all activity. "The greatest enemy of the Catholic Church in this country is poverty," said a leading dignitary of the Church not long ago. Here, then, is an economic problem straight away, and a reason why the clergy should take an interest in social study. But of this enough has been said.

It is the second set of adverse forces that concerns

us here. What of the Catholics who, though they take little interest in their religion, do take an interest in other matters? Who has not met them by the score? There is the young working lad thrilling with the interest of the new life of independence and bound to his Sunday Mass merely by an exiguous tie of habit which threatens to snap at the smallest strain. There is the working man, absorbingly interested in politics or in the aspirations of his class or in the exhilarating company of a socialistic clique whose cleverness and enterprise he contrasts with the uninspiring atmosphere of the parish club, where they play dominoes instead of reshaping the world. Or there is the boy who is "dead silly on them Pictures" (as his aunt explains), or the girl who has found an entrancing world of her own in penny novelettes. There is an abundance of energy in all these cases, but it is flowing in the wrong channels. These people all crave a fuller life, an escape into freer air. It does not occur to them that religion is alive and can give them that more abundant life they seek; and so their religion becomes the most mechanical thing about them—except perhaps when they are in a hole.

The problem is, then, to create in the minds of these people a deep and sustained interest in religion. This brings us to Psychology. Under what conditions may such an interest be secured?[1]

A deep and sustained interest can only be secured by cultivating a passion—a permanent, intense, affective state oscillating between desire, sentiment, and emotion. "A Passion," says Ribot, "is in the affective order what a fixed idea is in the intellectual order"; in fact every passion includes a fixed idea. A passion may be good or bad, but at all events it is *strong*. It

[1] These matters are admirably treated in Eymieu's *Le Gouvernement de soi-même* on which the following paragraphs are based.

exalts a man's forces to the maximum : it creates a predominant centre of interest to which everything else is made subservient. The only strong man is the man with a passion. A man with a passion is a man with a big interest, a man who knows what he wants and wants it very badly. He is the only man who does not drift.

There are good passions and bad. We are concerned with the former. A good passion is much the same as an "Ideal". The Saints had "Ideals"—strong, good passions. They had a "dominant centre of interest" which was God, and a "permanent affective tone," a deep steady love of God. They were the most un-apathetic people the world has ever seen.

An ideal is strong because it feeds on all other ideas and emotions. It strengthens and co-ordinates all our volitions. It means enthusiasm of a balanced and resolute kind, and such enthusiasm is the greatest force in the world. An enthusiast tormented by dyspepsia has a vitality unknown to a passionless Hercules. And finally, an ideal is the source of the deepest joy. Pleasure results from harmonious and intense activity, and the most harmonious and intense activity is that which is called forth by an ideal.

Now such a passion can be cultivated, and its cultivation depends upon two psychological laws. The first law is that "An idea prompts us to the act which it represents," and the second is that "An act evokes the feeling of which it is the normal expression". Thus, while we cannot directly influence our passions, we can do so indirectly and very efficaciously.

To banish religious apathy, then, we must cultivate a religious ideal. To cultivate a religious ideal we must do two things : we must multiply suitable ideas and we must encourage *acts similar to those which an*

ideal would produce. Then, and not till then, you will have a sustained and spontaneous interest.

Apply these two laws to the problem of Catholic apathy. Much of that apathy results from a lack of ideas—ideas, that is, of the motor type. A man may know many facts about his religion, and yet not take much interest in it. The facts do not develop in his mind—they lie isolated and dormant, while other facts are alive and breeding. It is not enough to tell a newly emancipated working lad that he *ought* to go to Mass: it is not enough to tell him, even repeatedly, that he ought to be interested in the Mass. What we have to do is to interest him in the Mass, to give him an idea of the Mass that will fructify into an interest in the Mass and bring him to it on Sunday mornings. Such an idea must be able to compete on equal terms with, let us say, the idea of going for a walk instead. When that idea is established it will not be necessary to remind him every week-end: he will remind himself and others too. So of interest in the club, interest in the guild, interest in the parish.

Now for our second law. Action reacts on sentiment, desire, passion. The quickest way to obtain a feeling is to act as though we had it. The most effective method of substituting a kind feeling for an unkind one, is to act as though we felt kindly. This influence of action on passion goes on unceasingly: if people would only cultivate a good passion deliberately they would be saved from the undesirable passions which grow up unnoticed, or from the apathy which results from lack of all interest.

Catholic apathy (like any other) could largely be exercised by well-selected *action.* Action develops interest along the line in which the action is applied. Catholic laymen who are apathetic might be made interested *by giving them something interesting to do.*

That is more potent than a wilderness of exhortation. The motor cyclist, to stimulate the driving power of his machine, runs it a few yards along the ground. After that it will do its own running.

How does this bear upon the encouragement by the clergy of social study among the laity? In a very practical way. "Social" ideas are, to a remarkable extent in these days, motor ideas. They develop in the mind. They associate with other ideas and they easily form a centre of interest. They lead to activity for they are closely associated with life. They are more fruitful than, say, the idea of playing dominoes.

Again, to launch a man into a Catholic study club in which he will be expected to ask and answer questions, examine his own knowledge and use his head, is to develop his interest in his religion to a surprising extent. By taking an active part in the club (even under initial pressure) he will become interested in the club. When he is once interested in the club, he will become interested in the religious principles which underlie Catholic social science. He will begin to ask endless questions about purely dogmatic matters which he now sees to be connected with life. He develops an enormous pride in his Catholicism and all that concerns it. He acquires a new centre of interest and finds a new meaning in life.

This is not merely a guess at what *might* happen. There is ample testimony to show that it *does* happen. In previous chapters we have seen many examples of how an interest in religion, an enthusiasm for religion, and a steady practice of religious duties have resulted, from such a process as is here described. Religious apathy has been banished not by direct means but by indirect. Where scoldings and appeals have proved ineffective, social action has led to religious interests. People have come to church *via* the co-operative society

or the study club. This does not mean that they were bribed. It means that their interest was awakened, and that their religion, which had hitherto languished in an airtight compartment, has been made to permeate the whole of their lives.

Recent experience in England has pointed the same way. The remarkable growth of Catholic social study clubs, fostered by the clergy, has already made its mark on the religious life of many a parish. It has given the priest a nucleus of keen, unselfish workers, men whose enthusiasm for the Church is infectious. It has deepened, not only the social sense, but the religious sense of the Catholic body.

Testimonies to the value of these study clubs are forthcoming from all sides. Cardinal Mercier, when asked to send a message of encouragement and advice to Catholic working men in England, recommended them to form study clubs.[1] Cardinal Amette has warmly encouraged the work. The Archbishop of Liverpool has said that "on the multiplication of these study circles rests our chief hope for the solution of the Social Question in England".[2] The Bishop of Northampton, in the pamphlet above quoted, writes as follows :—

> It is to this movement we look for the more abundant harvest that co-ordination and knowledge yield. The study classes must multiply in numbers and in membership up and down the country. Warned by the mistakes of others, they will carefully cherish their Catholic character as the *raison d'être* of their existence and the vital principle of their utility. Drawing their light from Catholic sources and their energy from fervent religious practice, spurred on to continuous effort by close contact with the sad realities of the world, and controlled by ready obedience to authority, they will be able to handle effectively the ever-growing masses of facts and information—statistics, reports, and legislative enact-

[1] See *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1913. [2] *Ibid.*

ments or proposals. Their sound principles will serve as a touchstone to distinguish true from false; and as a guiding star enabling them to steer a right course. Already the first-fruits have appeared in an output of literature. In the immediate future we shall look for the still more precious output of trained workers and capable leaders.

Now, if study clubs are "to multiply in numbers and in membership up and down the country," they must secure the interest and encouragement of the clergy. Popular social education is a matter which touches religion at so many points, that it may not be organised without reference to the local clergy. And if their approval is necessary, their active support and guidance is, in many cases, desirable.

Those to whom the notion of a study club is unfamiliar may urge that it is of the nature of a luxury and that a busy priest cannot be expected to give his time to it. Yet experience has shown that where the work is undertaken the results more than compensate for the time and trouble spent upon it. It may save a great deal of time in the long run, for it trains men to do much of the work which at present falls upon the shoulders of the priest. Moreover, as we shall see, arrangements can be made by which a study club receives expert guidance from the Catholic Social Guild, so that there is no demand at all upon the priest's time. All that is required is his approval and such occasional encouragement as may be possible.

Possibly even this may not be readily given at first. There may be a feeling that a multiplicity of activities in a parish is distracting, and that a study club might diminish attendance at Benediction or confraternity. As a matter of fact, it is likely to have just the opposite effect, as experience shows.

Nor can it be argued that because the men of a parish have failed to show any enthusiasm for the

club where billiards are played, they will therefore fail to take interest in a club where social science is studied. It may be that the club which demands an effort and appeals to higher motives will be more successful than the club which merely caters for amusement. The former is apt to create a more stable interest than the latter.

"But," it may be objected, "there are no students in my parish. They are all working people, tired out at the end of the day by the long hours of monotonous toil. There is and can be no ambition for study."

The recent growth of the Workers' Educational Association is a sufficient answer to this objection; or, to confine ourselves to the Catholic body, we may point to the study clubs which spring up in our parishes on the slightest encouragement. Even our clergy, who know the people so well, are sometimes unaware of the cherished aspirations of young men, especially of the working classes. A lecture on study clubs will almost invariably bring out the fact that there are at least half a dozen men in the parish who have long been hoping for something of the kind. Perhaps they have had a good deal to put up with in their daily work. They have borne in sullen silence the constant criticism of their religion which they felt powerless to answer; or they have felt "out of it" when social theories were propounded which their instinct told them were anti-Catholic. They would have given much to be able to speak out with assurance, to present convincingly the truth which they knew to be there—somewhere! Now at last they have a chance of fitting themselves to hold their own, and they welcome it.

Again, there may be hesitation to start a study club on the score that it would probably disseminate socialism. "We tried a debating club once, but such

unorthodox views were aired that we had to give it up."

Yes, but a study club is not a debating club. In a study club you have definite study of a reliable text-book. The men come to learn rather than to display learning. If they hold erroneous views the study club will gradually correct them.

Indeed, we have here a strong argument for the multiplication of study clubs. Where most error is afloat there is most need for study clubs. Denunciation will effect little, and it may have the result of driving men out of a Catholic atmosphere into one in which their extreme views will be applauded. How many keen and promising young men have thus been led to drift away from religion altogether! And the pity of it is that they were just the men who, if properly handled, would have made Catholic leaders and proved lay apostles. They were really more promising material than their apathetic and unimaginative companions who "never gave the priest any trouble".

In general we may remind ourselves that there is special need for tact in dealing with young men. A priest will sometimes refuse them any opportunity of talking in public at all on the ground that they would be sure to talk nonsense. Now it is quite true that a young man's tongue is apt to wag freely in the discussion of social questions, and that he has a weakness for tags picked up from newspapers and street orators. Such talk may indeed be silenced by a snub; but the result may be a sullen silence and an obstinate adherence to opinions which, if patiently examined, would give place to saner views. It is seldom wise to sit on the safety-valve.

There is a certain swelled headedness which comes to many young men of active mind and enterprising disposition, and which must not be taken too seriously.

It is the defect of a good quality; or, rather, it is a kind of intellectual measles, through which a young man will pass without difficulty with a little careful treatment.

The danger is lest the parish priest fail to realise that the young man whom he knew as a boy is no longer a boy, but is going through a phase of hypersensitive self-consciousness. A year or two ago you might have pulled his ears and told him not to be a fool, and he would merely have grinned. Now he will redden at such treatment and the iron will enter his soul. He claims respect, and probably, for all his *gaucherie*, he deserves it. The more rope that can be given him the better. Treat him as a boy and you may alienate him for ever. Treat him as a man and you will make him a loyal and energetic ally.

Of course, there may be in any group of men more obstinate cases to deal with than this. In the beginnings of a study club, for instance, a frequent difficulty is the obstinate man with a fluent tongue and the dangerous "little knowledge," before whose torrents of demagogic speech the rest are apt to be mute. But this difficulty usually solves itself. As the club makes orderly progress, lesson by lesson, our friend Thersites begins to exhaust his stock-in-trade, and meanwhile the others are securing ammunition of their own with which they will find much pleasure in opening fire on him. Their dumb perplexity gives way to a reassuring confidence in the principles which they are now learning how to grasp and apply.

Many a priest who would be able and willing to devote an hour or so a week to the direction of a study club is deterred by the consciousness that he does not know enough about social science to set up as a guide to others. He fears that technical questions would arise and that he would be unable to answer them.

And again, he has no notion how to plan out a course of social study for a class. He is alive to the need but feels unequal to supplying it.

The difficulty is of such common occurrence and leads to the loss of such valuable opportunities that it is well to consider it carefully.

So long as a priest can spare an hour a week there is no reason why he should not conduct a study club, however conscious he may be of an abysmal ignorance of social subjects. He is not asked to answer miscellaneous questions; he is only asked to guide the study of a group of men along definite lines already marked out for him. Of course if he happens to be an expert in social science and the allied branches of knowledge, he will feel more confident. He can then invite questions from all points of the compass and play the part of an encyclopedia. Yet, as a matter of fact, such an expert is apt to overwhelm the class with his erudition or at least to encourage a fatal indiscriminateness in the matter discussed. He will follow all the red herrings and wander down all the tempting byways suggested by the men, who are only anxious to keep him going and to avoid being called upon to think. He may interest the class momentarily by his disquisitions, but he will not be training them. A priest who is himself a beginner will very often make a far better director for a study club. He will appreciate the men's difficulties and get them to thresh out those difficulties for themselves, instead of asking random questions, the answers to which they would not remember. Above all, he will keep them to the point, for he will not feel safe if he leaves it. He has read the two or three pages of the text-book, and possibly looked up a reference or two, and he is prepared to explain the hard words, restate the arguments, show the connections, and in general provide

the very assistance that is most valuable and that can be provided by any intelligent man who has had the advantage of a training in philosophy and theology.

In every case where, in spite of hesitation, a start has been made, the difficulties have solved themselves.

The work of the director is now reduced to a minimum. He need not trouble himself about the choice of a text-book, the division of the subject, the points to be emphasised. The Catholic Social Guild advises him as to the selection of a subject, supplies him with a syllabus, indicates a text-book, provides literature, breaks up the matter into lessons, sets two or three questions on every lesson for discussion, refers to definite passages for collateral reading, answers difficulties that may arise, corrects written papers by correspondence, and tests the knowledge of the members by examinations.

As a matter of fact a priest who wishes to learn something of social science cannot do better than start a study club. He will thus get a far better grasp of the subject than if he were to shut himself up in his study and read a shelf full of books. There is much truth in the saying that the best way to learn a subject is to teach it to some one else. The Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, for instance, is better assimilated by taking a study club through it than by reading a host of commentaries. The process of stating a principle in various ways, of bringing it down to its simplest terms, of patiently accommodating it to the capacity of various minds, of groping for illustrations and considering exceptions—all this makes the principle a part of our lives and "a possession for ever". And all the while the men are actively helping in the process. One cannot direct a study club without learning a very great deal that is not to be found in books. Shrewd illustrations, apposite comparisons, pithy proverbial

wisdom, details of daily work, sidelights on social problems—these will be supplied in abundance when once the men have been encouraged to express themselves freely. But if the priest himself does all the talking, he himself will learn nothing and his audience very little.

The wise director remains as much as possible in the background, and remembers that he is there, not to impart information, but to train men to think and speak aright. He will discourage those aimless discussions which produce such aridity of mind. It will be his business to encourage shy members to express their opinions, to aid (with the minimum of interference) the stumbling attempts at restatement of the lesson, to restrain (without snubbing) the inevitable bore from holding the floor and monopolising the talking. He should not be too anxious to supply answers or set people right: it is far better to coax them into thinking out the problems for themselves. He may profitably defer a decision till "the next meeting," encouraging the men to turn the matter over in the meantime.

The director of a study club would do well to insist upon absolute punctuality in beginning and ending the meetings. Nothing is more fatal to the success of a club than the irritating experience of having to wait those who arrive ten minutes or a quarter of an hour late. Again, there will always be some who want to go on discussing interesting points after the hour is up. Let them do so privately; but those who wish to leave should be allowed to do so. Otherwise they will discontinue their attendance. Sunday afternoon clubs have more than once broken down through neglect of this obvious advice; the meetings had grown longer and longer and were finally felt to be a burden, interfering with tea or the afternoon walk.

Study club meetings should not be too formal. Let the men bring their pipes as well as their text-books. If they are expected to stand up when asking or answering questions there will be a loss of briskness, and the shy members will remain silent, feeling that to rise to one's feet is to announce that one has something important to say.

It may, of course, happen that a busy priest is really unable to spare even an hour a week for the direction of a study club. In that case he may launch such a club (or more than one), and having secured the appointment of a tactful and steady president and an energetic secretary, he may leave its direction to the Catholic Social Guild, which makes provision for cases of this kind and provides direction and correspondence tuition of a minute and elaborate kind.

In any case the priest who realises the bearing of social study on his parochial work will draw up for himself a course, however slight, of systematic reading. This is no easy task, for the literature of the subject is bewildering in its extent and variety. Where time is so precious, a priest can ill afford to waste it by reading books that do not matter. A few suggestions may be set down here.

In the first place there are certain books which every priest should read even if he goes no further. The Encyclical of Leo XIII. on the Condition of the Working Classes [1] should be a *vade mecum.* The late Bishop Stang wrote of it as follows:—

> I would respectfully suggest to my fellow-priests—as I am trying to do myself—that they read it in parts about four times in the year. We learn more from it than from all the books on social science.[2]

It should, of course, be followed by a reading of

[1] C.T.S. 1d. A translation with useful synopsis.
[2] *Socialism and Christianity*, p. 140.

Pope Pius X. on Social Reform[1] and supplemented by the other social encyclicals of Leo XIII.[2]

A general outline of social science (such as Mgr. Parkinson's admirable *Primer*[3]) should be studied closely and made the basis for future reading. Devas' *Political Economy*[4] will naturally be kept at hand for consultation. Ryan's *Living Wage*[5] and Antoine's *Cours d'Economie Sociale*[6] deserve careful reading.

For an elementary knowledge of English industrial history there is Warner's *Landmarks*,[7] and Cunningham and McArthur's *Outlines*.[8] Mgr. Parkinson is preparing a text-book on this subject also.

For particular social problems, the C.S.G. *Studies in Social Reform*[9] provide excellent introductions on Destitution, Sweating, Housing, Eugenics, etc.

Two other points may be noticed. Having mastered the main outlines in works such as those recommended above, it is well for the student to take up some particular social question and work it out in detail. This will be far more profitable than attempting to pursue all the ramifications of a vast and complicated subject. The selection of such a social "hobby" will naturally be made with reference to local needs and opportunities. A priest living in the country may well take up the subject of rural housing or small holdings ; in a town parish, the subject of unemployment or temperance may suggest itself. One who is a Poor Law Guardian may profitably investigate the problem of destitution ; one who is on an Educational Committee may examine the possibilities of school Clinics. Study of books should as far as possible be combined with careful observation and inquiry into local conditions. For

[1] C.T.S. 1d. [2] *The Pope and the People.* C.T.S. 1s.
[3] King. 2s. net. [4] Longmans. 7s. 6d. net.
[5] Macmillan. 2s. net. [6] Alcan, Paris. 9 frs. net.
[7] Blackie. 5s. [8] Cambridge University Press. 4s. net.
[9] King. 6d. net each.

this the priest has unrivalled opportunities, and any record of his experiences that he may make is likely to be extremely useful to others.

Secondly, it is well to know something not only of books for our own reading but also of books and pamphlets which may be suitably recommended to others in particular cases. Many a recruit has been won for a study club, or for the S.V.P., or some other line of practical work, by the simple process of recommending or lending him a book or a pamphlet. On the other hand, many a likely student or worker is lost to the cause, either because such an opportunity is not taken, or because the wrong book has been selected. We should be able to accommodate our fly to the fancy of the fish and should have a large selection at hand.

Again, a priest who is alert will frequently find cases where Catholics are being pressed by their fellow-workers or friends on subjects like Socialism, Syndicalism, Spiritualism, Christian Science, Race Suicide, etc., or confronted with the familiar statements about the Church "doing nothing for the working man" or fostering ignorance or social evils. In all these cases it is well to be able to lay one's hand on the very pamphlet that is wanted. A careful study of the excellent Classified Catalogue of the Catholic Truth Society should form part of every priest's education. It will prove useful, not only for meeting particular cases such as the above, but also for stocking the church case with pamphlets.

So much for what may be regarded as the bare essentials of social knowledge for the clergy—the matters that "every priest should know". He should master the outlines of social science, keep in touch with the best knowledge bearing on his actual social work, and know where to turn for further information. He should be able to *start* others on a course of social

study, and he should be so far aware of the fearful complexity of modern social questions as to avoid rashly dogmatising about them, especially in public.

This may serve as a minimum, but surely it will not content us as an average. It is imperatively necessary to raise the standard of knowledge in this matter among the clergy. The need exists and is keenly felt among Anglicans; but it exists, too, among ourselves. One who has had exceptional opportunities of knowing and who is entirely loyal and sympathetic writes as follows:—

> I have been confirmed in my belief that the standard of economic knowledge among the working-class laity is considerably higher than among the clergy. There will soon be an urgent necessity for Catholic experts.

No doubt the increasing extent to which social questions are being studied in our seminaries will in time produce its result. Meanwhile we may recall the example of the numberless priests in France, Belgium, and other countries who, in spite of having had no preliminary training in social science in their seminary course, and in spite of advancing years, have set themselves to cultivate a subject which they saw to be of immense practical value in the care of souls. These men were the pioneers of a great Catholic movement, and we are still in the pioneer stage in this country. As has been said more than once, the practical experience and wide influence and philosophical training of a priest give him immense advantages. A short time devoted to reading will be far more profitable in his case than prolonged study by one who has not so many points of contact with life. What in itself is a fascinating hobby becomes, when taken up by the priest, a valuable asset to the cause of religion and social reform.

A priest who is studying modern social problems will often feel the need of comparing notes with his brother priests. Difficult and delicate questions will arise in which books furnish little guidance. Some measure of collaboration between the clergy is most desirable and has already been secured in many countries. "Social Days" for priests have been organised in France by the *Action Populaire* and have proved most stimulating and helpful.

It should not be impossible to organise similar "Social Days" for priests in this country, similar to the "Days of Recollection" already existing. At all events a little group of priests in the same town or district might arrange to form a study club of their own and meet in one another's rooms one afternoon each week or fortnight or month. This plan has already been tried with success; those who take part in the meetings derive valuable hints for the direction of the study clubs in their own parishes.

CHAPTER XII.

DIRECTIONS AND COUNSELS.

THE social action of the clergy is, as is obvious, subordinate to their directly spiritual work of administering the Sacraments and preaching the Word of God. The priest's interest in bodies is conditioned by his interest in souls. Not that the former is unimportant, but that the latter is unspeakably more important.

There is, of course, always a danger lest the clergy should allow their interest in the material concerns of their flock to interfere with these primary spiritual functions. This has actually happened from time to time in the Church, and various enactments have been passed to remedy the evil. Hence there has come into being a somewhat elaborate body of ecclesiastical provisions regulating the social action of the clergy.

In the first place priests, like others, are bound by the general rules which have been drawn up for Catholic social action; such, for instance, as are contained in the Encyclicals *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, *Rerum Novarum*, and *Graves de Communi* of Pope Leo XIII., the special instruction issued by the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, and the *Motu Proprio* of Pope Pius X. on Christian Social Action.[1]

[1] For the Italian original, see *Acta S. Sedis*, vol. xxxvi., pp. 349-54. An English translation has been published by the Catholic Truth Society, "Catholic Social Guild Pamphlets," No. 4.

Secondly, there are a number of provisions of Canon Law affecting the social action of the clergy in particular.

The third book of the Decretals contains the general regulation "*Ne clerici vel monachi secularibus negotiis se immisceant*".[1] A special law forbids them to engage in commercial pursuits. This special law admits of exceptions: a cleric may engage in honest commercial pursuits if he has no other means of supplying his actual and personal needs. To supply less personal or less actual needs by such means requires a dispensation from his bishop or (in the case of an Italian diocese) from the Holy See.

The general law has been less accurately defined. *Secularia negotia* are declared by Schmalzgrueber to be those *quæ ad reipublicae statum secularem potius quam ecclesiasticum pertinent.* This does not carry us far: for the same transaction may be secular or ecclesiastical according to its motive or its circumstances. This general law does not forbid the administration of temporals by clerics. A priest may administer his own property or the property of a wealthy abbey, or he may undertake tiresome financial business on behalf of the indigent. Clerical saints as well as Lord Mayors have organised relief funds: the business in such a case is "clericalised" by its aim. The same may be said of economic undertakings which are established ultimately for the good of religion. Yet the dignity of the priesthood and the spiritual ministrations of the priest must never be compromised; and to safeguard these other legislation, as we have now to see, has been introduced.[2]

Of special importance in this matter is the decree

[1] Tit. 50.

[2] The above is based on Vermeersch, *Revue de l'Action Populaire*, 10th April, 1911.

Docente Apostolo, issued by Pius X. in November, 1910. This decree has reference to the participation of the clergy[1] in work for the temporal assistance of the faithful, specifying saving banks of various kinds. While heartily approving of such institutions (the decree exhorts and recommends all priests to grudge neither pains nor advice in their foundation and extension) it forbids clerics to hold such offices in them as entail the cares and responsibilities of temporal administration—such as, *e.g.*, those of president, chairman, secretary, treasurer, etc.

It further enjoins that within four months from the date of its publication (November, 1910), all clerics who hold such offices shall resign them and not undertake them for the future without special leave of the Holy See obtained beforehand.

The decree enumerates rural banks, savings banks, etc., but is apparently meant to include all kinds of mutual benefit societies of a commercial or economic character (except clergy benefit societies), such as co-operative societies and the like. The priest is encouraged to found them and to support them with his advice, but is prohibited from taking a responsible share in them.

It would seem that this does not preclude him from being an ordinary shareholder, so far as Canon Law already permits; nor even from becoming an ordinary member of a committee of management.[2]

Father Vermeersch[3] points out that the decree

[1] Besson thinks (*Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, February, 1911) that the decree affects all clerics. "*Nemo e clero*," says the decree in one place. He holds that it extends to those who have received the tonsure, as well as to lay-brothers in religion. Vermeersch, on the other hand, would restrict it to those in priest's Orders. The *ius commune* would appear to favour this view.

[2] So the writer of an excellent Note in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* for June, 1911.

[3] *Revue de l'Action Populaire*, 10th April, 1911.

refers to cares *and* responsibilities. He thinks that it is only the combination which is prohibited, and that, where there is no danger of a priest being over-absorbed or distracted, he may undertake either the administration alone or the responsibility alone. This opinion, however, has been contested.[1]

Father Vermeersch warns us against certain wrong interpretations of the decree. There is, he says, a danger—

(1) lest we should interpret as prohibitive a law which is merely cautionary;

(2) lest we should overlook a principal part of the decree, *viz.*, that which enjoins the promotion of economic undertakings, and fix our entire attention on the restrictive part;

(3) lest many priests, some through indolence and laziness, others through scrupulosity or narrowness of conscience, should neglect to found or to support works which are indispensable to the welfare of their flock.

He adds that the decree should have two good results. It should remind the parochial clergy that they may not neglect their parochial duties; and it should prevent imprudence in the assumption of responsible positions. The co-operation of the priest in economic undertakings for the good of his people may be necessary to ensure their success and to ensure their being kept on right lines.

The decree, then, is not intended to hamper any desirable social activity on the part of the clergy. Special treatment is provided for exceptional cases. Dispensations have already been obtained in large numbers, and it would appear that the Holy Father is willing to consider representations made by the Bishops in special circumstances, and to grant such

[1] *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, May, 1911, and *I.E.R.*, *loc. cit.*

relaxations of the general law as will prevent it from hindering that legitimate social action of the clergy which the Holy See has so warmly commended.[1]

Directions have also been given to the clergy by the Holy See as to the duty of giving the first place to spiritual ministrations, of subordinating social action to episcopal control, and of securing the approval of ecclesiastical superiors for all publications dealing with social questions.[2] These directions are minute and stringent. When taken together they might give the impression that the Holy See discourages, or at most tolerates, social activity by priests. Yet it must be noted that the very Popes who have multiplied safeguards are those who have most warmly encouraged the clergy to undertake social work, and that such encouragements are to be found in the very documents which contain the most strict regulations on the subject. It would appear that Leo XIII. and Pius X. were determined that no priest should be deterred from social action by any warnings as to the possibility of its abuse.

Thus, for instance, in the Encyclical on Christian Social Action, Pope Pius X., after warning the clergy against some of the dangers of social work, continues as follows:—

> Nor does this in any way diminish his zeal. The true apostle ought "to become all things to all men, to save all": like our Divine Redeemer, he ought to be moved with compassion, "seeing the multitudes distressed, lying like sheep that have no shepherd". Let then each one

[1] See Vermeersch, *loc. cit.*

[2] See Leo XIII., *Rerum Novarum*, *Graves de Communi*, and the Letter to the French clergy; Pius X., *Pascendi* and the Letter to the Italian Bishops (1905); also the Special Instruction to the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, 27th January, 1902 (see *Rome on the Social Question*, a penny pamphlet in the C.S.G. series).

strive by the efficacious propaganda of the press, by the living exhortation of speech, by direct help in the above-mentioned cases, to ameliorate, within the limits of justice and charity, the economic condition of the people, supporting and promoting those institutions which conduce to this end, and those especially which aim at fortifying the multitude against the invasion of Socialism; thus to save them at once from economic ruin and from moral and religious destruction. In this way the co-operation of the clergy in the works of Catholic action has a deeply religious end; it will never become a hindrance, but will be a help to their spiritual ministry by enlarging its sphere and multiplying its fruits.

Similarly in the *Docente Apostolo* the Pope not only exhorts but commands (*praecipit*) the clergy to assist in the formation and extension of the various kinds of banks with regard to which he has to warn them against financial responsibilities. The like encouragements will be found in his condemnation of the *Sillon*, whose errors had infected clergy and laity alike.

Other examples will be found in an appendix.

The qualities which should distinguish the social action of the priest have been well stated by Father Vermeersch[1] whose main points are embodied in the following pages.

I. The social action of the priest must be *subordinate* to his primary spiritual mission.[2]

Such action must also be subordinate to the authority of the Bishops:—

Although it is very desirable for them (priests) to go among the people, conformably to the wish of the Holy Father, they must nevertheless act with the necessary

[1] *Manuel social*, vol. ii. pp. 17-21.

[2] See *Pius X. on Christian Social Action*, a penny pamphlet in the C.S.G. series, pp. 29, 30. The Pope points out the danger of attaching an excessive importance to the material interests of the people, forgetting the much more serious ones of the sacred ministry.

subordination to their ecclesiastical superiors, thus putting in practice the very important cautions given by the august Pontiff even to those who have already justly deserved praise for their great activity and spirit of sacrifice in Christian popular action.[1]

II. The social action of the priest must be *pacific*. The priest by his office has unrivalled opportunities of acting as a peacemaker, of softening the asperities of social controversies, of diminishing the friction between capital and labour. These opportunities would be thrown away and grave scandal caused were he to foment class bitterness or to deliver unmeasured tirades against sections of the community or individuals. We may recall some wise words from the collective Letter of the Belgian Bishops issued in 1905 :—

> It is equally deplorable that some employers should be lacking in a true Christian spirit of justice and charity, and that some workmen should vindicate their rights by dangerous or illegitimate means. The priest has duties to all. If anyone goes astray it is the priest's business to instruct him—but always with an unalterable sweetness. . . . Nevertheless, this gentleness and moderation should not lead him to forget his mission of instructing all in their duties as Christians.

There is much to be said for the view that the pulpit should rarely if ever be employed for lectures or sermons on particular social or economic questions. The great dogmatic truths and moral laws underlying social questions may, of course, be suitably treated there; and, on occasion, grave warnings may be discreetly uttered against particular social dangers, especially those which (like intemperance) bear directly upon religious life. But when it is remembered how

[1] *Rome and the Social Question*, p. 14. See also Leo XIII. to French Clergy (1899), and *Graves de Communi*.

much the average congregation stands in need of instruction in pure religious doctrine, it will be seen that the times available for sermons can ill be spared for discoursing on topics which contain so much debatable matter. Moreover, the priest, as it were, takes an unfair advantage of his people when he turns his sermon into a social lecture. The people have come to hear the gospel, and they may listen with justifiable impatience to a dissertation on housing or the living wage. Not that these subjects are without their bearing on religion; but they are better treated in the parochial hall or guild-room, where they can be explained in more detail, and opportunities given for questions or discussion. The people who are likely to be interested in these matters can be gathered into a study club and enabled to get a thorough grasp of the subject. In a sermon there is a temptation to generalise when treating of social questions, or to make sweeping assertions which may cause ill feeling or at least perplexity among the members of the congregation. Thus, for instance, an undiscriminating denunciation of Socialism delivered to a congregation, many of whose members confuse Socialism with the legitimate claims and aspirations of labour, may have the effect of alienating the very men who, if otherwise approached, might become active workers on right lines. So, again, of vague denunciations of Capitalism which usually only serve to embitter both parties in labour disputes.

The priest has a most important and delicate work to do in the way of social pacification; but most of that work must be done outside the pulpit. The Belgian Bishops in the Letter already quoted, enumerate the points which the priest must endeavour to impress upon the employer and the workman respectively. He must persuade employers, managing directors,

shareholders and the like to look to the moral conditions among which their men work: to give them every opportunity for performing their religious duties: to remove dangers to faith or morals: to select their foremen with the greatest circumspection: to encourage all healthy organsiation among their workers: to improve their material condition by making work more profitable, less painful, and less dangerous. All this requires immense tact and patience, yet the influence which a priest is able to exert in this way is enormous. The scandal which an unjust or harsh Catholic employer may cause is incalculable. What priest who has had any long experience of work in our large towns cannot tell of Catholic workmen who have become embittered and even abandoned the faith on account of the notorious injustice practised by his employer who worships in the front bench and is asked to open the parochial bazaar? How many non-Catholic working men would be attracted to the Church if all Catholic employers lived up to the standard set for them by Leo XIII. Yet experience shows that the clergy can do much to set this great evil right. By patience and tact, in private conversation with employers who are members of their flock, they can often remedy an injustice which largely springs from ignorance. It often happens that a Catholic employer simply does not realise the amount of hardship he is causing nor the responsibilities which rest upon him as a Catholic. He can be got to take a personal and Christian interest in his men, and to take some trouble in ascertaining their point of view and considering their interests. He will be genuinely grateful afterwards to the priest who has widened his horizon, given him a new interest in life and shown him his great opportunity. A priest who does his duty in this matter will not be exposed to the imputation of having con-

doned with injustice for the sake of a substantial donation to his church or schools.

In this connection it may be pointed out that if a priest wishes to establish ideal relations between employers and workmen, he cannot do better than persuade both to make a retreat, if possible together. The matter is easily arranged and the effects are simply amazing. These retreats are the most powerful means of promoting social peace.[1]

Similarly in dealing with the working classes the priest may do much to disabuse them of the violent generalisations about employers which they are apt to believe on the authority of labour agitators. He may get them to know at least something of the employer's point of view; and he may also get them to realise that, as Pope Leo XIII. has pointed out, the procuring of social reform requires sacrifices all round. It cannot be effected merely by coercing employers or passing Acts of Parliament. If an employer must pay a living wage, a workman must put in an honest day's work. Injustice is committed by wasting the time or materials of an employer. For much of the irritability displayed by some employers the men have only themselves to blame, since they show themselves utterly reckless of property which is not their own. The priest has an enormous field here in striving to promote feelings of mutual responsibility and Christian sympathy between capital and labour.

III. The social action of the priest must be *enlightened.* Not all priests can find time to make themselves experts in social science, but at least they may learn enough of the subject to avoid the more obvious pitfalls. Cardinal Goossens addressed his priests as follows:—

[1] See my *Retreats for the People.* Sands & Co.

You must initiate yourselves in the study of new problems and become instructed in a science which has hitherto had no place in the programme of scholastic education.

But enough has already been said about the clergy and social study in the last chapter.

IV. *Prudence* is obviously another requisite. Excellent schemes may be wrecked by forcing them too insistently upon those who are not yet ready for them. The priest's mission in this matter is, as has been indicated, a very delicate one. He may have to deal with men who have had a large practical experience of subjects which he himself knows only from books, and who further may have imbibed strong class prejudices which will only yield to patient treatment. The aim of the priest will be to encourage initiative in others and to allow the largest possible measure of freedom, while at the same time tactfully converting them from extreme positions which may have been taken up in all good faith. He will be ready to take the advice of experts and he will have something to learn from every one.

Sound social action must largely depend upon the social education of the community; and the furtherance of that education is a matter that demands considerable prudence. It may be seriously compromised by acrimonious controversy, by party political contentions, by a failure to recognise that the application of Catholic principles to the changing conditions of society is a slow and difficult matter, and that personal opinions must not be imposed upon others as though they were the teaching of the Church.

V. Yet if prudence is necessary, *Perseverance* is no less essential. How often is a priest inclined to give up all attempts at social action on the ground that he has tried it and failed. Social work is from the nature of the case discouraging because it generally begins

with mistakes. It means working with others, and the art of working with others can scarcely be learnt save by the process of making mistakes. An enterprise that lies wholly in my own hands can be shaped as I please; when it rests partly with others elements of uncertainty come in. There must be adjustment of views on both sides. This may involve a very discouraging friction.

Almost all successful works have begun with difficulties and even apparent failure. This is a natural law as well as a supernatural provision for the elimination of "self" in the workers. A study club which begins with an enthusiastic splash and a large membership will (if it is going to have real vitality and not a mere semblance of life impressed from without) almost certainly dwindle down to half its original membership. This only means that half the members are prepared to take off their coats and *work*, while the other half are not. Only a trial can reveal who the real workers are, even to themselves.

So of a boys' club. It may drag on through a series of experiments until the right men and the right methods are discovered. Progress may be blocked in a branch of the C.Y.M.S. or a Conference of the S.V.P. or a Temperance Society by personal differences or a failure to recognise modern needs; and the priest is tempted to acquiesce in stagnation. Yet sustained interest is the condition of success.

Every minister of holy religion must bring to the struggle *the full energy of his mind and all his power of endurance.*[1]

VI. *Disinterestedness* is insisted upon by all writers as a necessary feature of the priest's social action. Not only must there be no suspicion of a desire for monetary gain in his part (such a suspicion can seldom

[1] Pope Leo XIII., *The Condition of the Working Classes*, p. 51.

arise), but, what is more practical, he must not be thought to be aiming at power or influence. There is deep-rooted in human nature an instinct to play the despot of which even apostolic men do not always entirely rid themselves. "Even in these days of the layman's independence," writes Canon Keatinge, "it is possible for a priest to be somewhat of a despot in his own mission and in his work." He adds:—

> If the layman is to do the work, he asks to be allowed to do it in his own way. Here is the right and the true price of his work, but it is somewhat saddening to see how often we are unwilling to pay it. He does the work; let him have the responsibility; fall in with his arrangements even though they are not ideal nor of the best. If he pays the piper, either in money or in personal service, let him call the tune.[1]

To this there must obviously be limitations; yet its application is broad enough.

Our work, to be disinterested, must be free not only from despotism but also from that "elation" which is liable to beset the young apostle especially before he has been baptised with the cold water of discouragement or has experienced, like a modern St. Sebastian, the plentiful arrows of criticism. The glow of satisfaction which attends the successful launching of a brigade, or a club, or a study circle needs to be honestly examined: not that it may cool into apathy, but that it may be transmuted into the enthusiasm of the Saints, who, while working as though all depended on themselves, were content to leave the results to God, convinced that of themselves they could do nothing.

Many a priest does successful work—but makes it impossible for others to carry it on. He has had every-

[1] *The Priest*, p. 283.

thing in his own hands. His officers have no office, for he "keeps watchdogs and does all the barking himself". Now, in social work especially, it should be the aim of the priest to train others. His aim should be to step aside as soon as men have been educated up to relieving him. And meanwhile let others have as much of the credit as possible:—

It is a great art—an art which requires self-effacement—not to be too much in evidence, but to encourage the initiative of others: to suggest useful proposals and to let others have the credit of their results.[1]

VII. "*Super omnia . . . charitatem habete.*" This sums up everything, and to it Pope Leo XIII returns again and again in his social Encyclicals. Supernatural love must be at the root of all our social endeavour: it is poles apart from mere philanthropy.

For his high social mission the priest needs not only charity, but the graces of charity, the affability, the gentleness, the patience, the courtesy, the tender sympathy and delicate insight that are the fine flowers of Catholic charity. These things are necessary because, as Cardinal Vaughan has said, "without them a priest will very often fail to carry out his ministry, and he loses souls whom he might have sanctified and saved, because he has fatally alienated them".[2]

Even if he does not alienate them he at least fails to bring out their latent possibilities. The pattern of all social workers is St. Vincent de Paul: he could do anything with people, and the secret of it was the gentle affability which he practised himself and urged upon others. "What the world produces as a veneer, becomes the substance and life of the soul in the perfect Christian."[3] Here we touch upon the deepest

[1] Vermeersch, *loc. cit.*, p. 321.
[2] *loc. cit.*, p. 211. See the whole Conference.
[3] Cardinal Vaughan, *loc. cit.*, p. 217.

sources of priestly zeal and pass beyond the scope of the present book. Let it only be added that besides caring about our social works we must pray about them, remembering St. Bernard's words: *Nunc manent tria haec; verbum, exemplum et oratio; major autem horum oratio.*

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PRIEST AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL AGENCIES.

IT is quite clear that the necessary charitable and social work of a parish cannot be carried on save by the instrumentality of organised bodies of laymen and laywomen. It is now no longer possible—if it ever was—for the priest, *personally and unaided*, to relieve the poverty of a parish, care for the sick, manage the clubs, keep working lads faithful to their religious duties, fight the battle of religious education, promote the Catholic press, organise recreations, combat intemperance, and carry on the hundred other works which more or less directly concern the salvation of souls. No matter how great the priest's zeal or how unflagging his energy, he will find it impossible in these days to do by himself a tithe of the work that must be done.

The need of organised lay help in a parish has been insisted upon by Popes [1] and by Bishops at home and abroad.[2] It has formed the subject matter of pastorals, of sermons, and of papers read at Catholic Conferences and Congresses.[3] It has been treated in books

[1] See *The Pope and the People.*

[2] See *Actes Episcopaux* (*Action Populaire*).

[3] Some have been reprinted as C.T.S. pamphlets, *e.g.*, *The Layman in the Church* (Canon William Barry), *The Help of the Laity* (Father John Norris).

written by the clergy and in books written for the clergy.[1]

The point need not be laboured and a few quotations will suffice to illustrate the wealth of exhortation which has been devoted to encouraging lay activity in the parish:—

It has been whispered that the laity are not sufficiently employed in the work of the Church. Would to God that more among them stepped forward to throw themselves into the great Christian work of regenerating the masses in overcrowded centres of population. This work of fraternal charity is to their hand. The Church invites, nay, presses them into her service.[2]

The position of the educated laity in the Church; their co-operation with the clergy in all kinds of work, religious, social, educational; their influence both within and without the fold; the organisation of their forces under the guidance of the Church and her hierarchical leaders; these are questions becoming more and more vital every year as this twentieth century progresses. It will be to a large extent a century of the laity, and that, let us hope, in the very best sense of the phrase.[3]

What, then, ought to be our attitude towards lay help? We must welcome it heartily and use it to the full, even though its promoters are not any more perfect than we are ourselves. . . . And if you have lay help of the right sort—and have it you will if you are tactful and ready to pay the price—bless God for His mercy to your mission.[4]

[The priest] can enlist those who have time and talent

[1] See the excellent chapter on "Social Work and Lay Help" in Canon Keatinge's *The Priest*, hereafter quoted: also the last chapter of Fr. Phelan's *The Young Priest's Keepsake*.

[2] Cardinal Vaughan, *The Work of the Catholic Laity in England*, p. 15.

[3] Bishop Casartelli in his Introduction to Fr. Hull's *Fortifying the Layman*. Sands & Co.

[4] Canon Keatinge, *loc. cit.*, pp. 280, 284.

in the service of those who have neither. *This is the age of the lay apostolate.*[1]

It goes without saying that never was there a time in the history of the Church in this country when the Church had greater need of the active influence of the most intelligent amongst our laity than at present.[2]

The Catholic layman has perhaps a nobler and more distinguished part to play now in the service of Christ than at any former time. For not only has the more general dissemination of knowledge, and the more general participation of the people in local and imperial government opened out to him a sphere and opportunities which he had never possessed before to the same extent, but he is invited by the authorities of the Church to co-operate in a hundred ways and to take part in a hundred works, which are essentially and intimately connected with public life and the salvation of souls. Rich and poor, learned and uneducated, are united in groups and associations which aim at securing the claims of Christianity and of souls.[3]

Organised lay activity in the parish for social and charitable purposes is, of course, no novelty, but a signal feature of Catholic tradition. Abbot Gasquet has made us all familiar with the extent of this activity in pre-Reformation England :—

In these days the strong sense of responsibility in the working of a parish and the well-being of a parochial district, with which our Catholic forefathers were imbued, does not exist. . . .

To-day at best, a priest can enlist the sympathies and practical support of but a small fraction of his flock in their parish ; the rest, and by far the greater number, take little or no part in the work, regard it, even though they do not speak of it, as his parish, his business, not theirs. . . . In pre-Reformation days such a state of things was unknown and altogether impossible. The parish was then an ever-

[1] Rev. T. O'Donnell, C.M., *The Priest of To-day*, p. 95.
[2] Cardinal Farley to the *Central Verein*, 23rd July, 1912.
[3] Cardinal Vaughan, *A Manual of Catholic Politics*, p. 86.

present reality; the taking part in its affairs was regarded as a duty incumbent on all, and, so far as we may judge by the somewhat scanty records which have come down to us, the duty was well fulfilled in practice. . . . The poorer parishioners were assisted by the corporate property of the parish.[1]

Another consideration may be briefly referred to. Laymen must be given social work to do, not only because the work would not otherwise be done, but also because laymen need to do it for their own sake. This is particularly true of the well-to-do and the educated. For these, writes Cardinal Vaughan, personal contact with the poor and the working classes

is as necessary for the right formation of their own Christian character as it is beneficial to their poorer brethren. There are virtues which they will never acquire if they abide in their own isolation of wealthy and pleasant surroundings. Selfishness is the bane of the upper classes, and selfishness is destroyed by a life spent in benefiting the needy.[2]

But the layman need not be wealthy or highly educated in order to take a leading part in the social work of a parish. How often are the most successful Brothers of the S.V.P. scarcely better off in this world's goods than those whom they relieve! And how often are those who have but an elementary education far more keen on the spread of Catholic literature or the work of study clubs than those who have had a college and university education!

The main part of a priest's social activity, then, will be to provide work for the layman and the laywoman and to keep them at it. At present the work usually falls upon a very few: and the priest himself is so much overburdened owing to this shortage of

[1] *The Layman in the pre-Reformation Parish*, pp. 2, 3, 7. Catholic Truth Society.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 14.

volunteers that he has no time, he will tell you, to recruit fresh ones. Yet surely it would be an economy of time to encourage and train others to do a work which is at present pressing on his own shoulders and which need not be done by a priest at all. The reason why many priests spend long hours on various public committees is because otherwise Catholic interests will not be represented. But if lay representatives can be found, the priest will be set free to cope with the increasing amount of more directly spiritual work which is waiting to be done.

In successful social work abroad much stress is laid upon the recruiting and training of young workers; and authoritative documents make it clear that this task of encouraging and initiating others is one which is especially suitable to the priest. Papal directions return to this point again and again. Instead of allowing himself to be strangled by work which others could very well do, the priest is to encourage the activity of others and keep the machine running smoothly.

But how are fresh workers to be secured? *By giving them a vital interest in the work:* that is to say, we must impress upon them just those ideas which will fructify in an ideal or "good passion". We do not want merely the sentiment which will evaporate as soon as the priest's back is turned, but the permanent bent which will carry them through drudgery and fatigue. They will look for and deserve encouragement: but they must not expect to be coaxed or patted on the back at every hour of the day.

A beginning may, no doubt, be made in the schools, especially in the secondary schools. It is to be feared that boys and girls very often leave our educational establishments without the vestige of a social sense and almost regard the world as made for their personal

convenience.[1] Yet even they can generally be reached with a little patient effort, either directly by the priest or indirectly through others.

The secret is, of course, to make use of interests already existing. Where there is a foundation of natural piety the work is easier: we have only to enlarge the notion of piety in our talks to the Children of Mary or the Guild or Sodality. Our Lord's image in the poor and suffering is a better likeness than the statues and pictures to which they are devout. The one should send them to the other. Love is shown by work rather than by words.

In other cases we may make use of a taste for reading. A well chosen little parochial library of social books and pamphlets may win many a recruit. Or again, lecture from outside, not on an abstruse social topic, but on the need of social work, the opportunity of Catholics, or their traditions in civilising Europe will hardly fail to stir a few. The horizon is widened and a generous impulse evoked, which, if given prompt direction, may grow into an ideal. The most unlikely people are wont to be found on these occasions shyly coming up to the lecturer to tell him that they would like to make themselves useful.

Sometimes the appeal may be in the first instance to the sporting instinct or the love of action or even that desire for control which often appears so early and may be turned so easily to good or evil. The instinct in the girl for "mothering," which makes the doll the eternal toy, is matched in the boy by an instinct for "fathering"—or bossing. In its crude form the instinct may cause strife rather than social harmony; but it may be refined into a gentle and strong big-brotherliness which is invaluable in the Brigade or

[1] See *Social Work in Catholic Schools*. C.T.S., in the series of "Catholic Social Guild Pamphlets".

S.V.P. or Club. But the price to be paid for it is this: that the priest is himself the big brother of all the young men in his parish.

It must frankly be admitted that the problems of "lay help" are numerous and perplexing, and that lay apathy is not the only reason why such help is not always forthcoming. If the priest is sometimes embarrassed by the tiresome and impossible lay helper, many an excellent helper is discouraged by the unsympathetic attitude of the priest.

It is unfortunately easy to take sides in this matter, and to multiply instances of a priest's lack of consideration or a layman's lack of deference. But every allowance should be made for such cases. The layman volunteer is often unaware of the exigencies of parish organisation and is apt to press impossible schemes. The priest, on the other hand, may have had in the past such unfortunate experiences of lay help as to have been driven to the conclusion that what he cannot do by himself is not worth doing. He is determined to "keep things in his own hands" and to obviate lay eccentricities by establishing a despotic rule. He makes a wilderness and calls it peace: we should blame him less if we knew the strife he had encountered.

The main function of government, it has been wisely said, is not *laissez faire*, nor simply *faire*, but *aider à faire*. It is so with the social action of the priest. At times there may be in a parish, as in a country, a temporary need for the strong hand, the increase of centralisation and "interference". It is the price of order and so of ultimate liberty. Autonomy will revive when peace is established. It may be that a parish committee, given too much rope (through idolence or excess of optimism), has flooded the football team with non-Catholics, or turned the institute into a somewhat disreputable drinking club, or allowed the debating

society to be run by a clique of firebrands. A firm hand is required in the priest: but as things improve the firmness should be tempered with flexibility and not become a matter of rigid habit.

Cases such as the above can generally be avoided, if care is taken from the beginning to spiritualise the social works of a parish and to look carefully to their organisation. They should draw their strength from the best elements in the parish and be permeated by the sap of Catholic devotion. They must not be parasitic but, as Canon Keatinge says, grown from within:—

> When social work and lay help grow up from within, as they ought, serious difficulties ought not to arise; but when some busybody comes along, a newcomer into the mission it may be, and says to the priests: "Let there be lay help and social work," the lay help may or may not come, but foul weather will surely come and threaten all social work for many a day to come.[1]

Spiritualise and organise! Here is the secret of successful social work in a parish. Both require time, patience and endless tact.

The question of spiritualising social works has given rise to an endless amount of discussion and has been treated very fully abroad in books and pamphlets. A number of pressing practical problems at once present themselves to the priest on the mission. What spiritual practices are to be required for membership of the boys' or men's club? If the standard is put high, many will be kept away and thus lose their one opportunity of contact with a priest; the club will become a select gathering of the pious and thus fail in its scope. On the other hand, if little or nothing is exacted in the way of frequentation of the Sacraments, or if the rule is not urged, there is grave danger lest the club lose its

[1] *The Priest*, p. 281.

distinctively Catholic character altogether. It will take its tone from the least satisfactory members and become a drag on the spiritual life of the parish. Or again, is the frequent presence of a priest necessary for the success of a boy's club? Should the young men's society be kept distinct from the Guild or Confraternity or Sodality, or should the motto of "no prayer no play" be adopted? Should non-Catholics ever be admitted into our societies? These and similar questions constantly arise, and, though their solution must depend largely on local conditions, it is useful to see what general conclusions have been reached by those who have had wide experience and studied the question scientifically.

The first conclusion seems to be that the social work of a parish can best be spiritualised by promoting and keeping at a high level a *purely spiritual* organisation, distinct from the charitable, social and recreative societies of the parish, strictly limited in numbers, with a high standard of religious practice, forming in fact a school of religious perfection for the laity. Such an organisation will offer no inducement save the opportunity of leading a model Christian life. It will constitute a spiritual *élite*. Its name is of less importance: it may be a Sodality, or a Third Order, or a group of Promoters of the Apostleship of Prayer, or the nucleus of a Blessed Sacrament Guild. The important thing is that its purpose and spirit should be recognised and maintained. It does not seek a large membership, it does not impose financial obligations, it does not exact any particular form of social service, it does not organise entertainments. It is the apple of the priest's eye and he gives it of his best, watching over the spiritual growth of its members like a novice master.

It may be objected that such a society would not attract people. True, it is not likely to attract every-

one, but it will attract some, and perhaps more than we think. The number will grow by degrees if the spirit is kept up and the priest has his heart in the work. There are more vocations to sanctity in the dullest parish than might be imagined: quite ordinary people have within them a fund of generosity which is easily evoked, a spiritual ambition awaiting an outlet. A beginning may be made with half a dozen: the procedure at their meetings will depend on the devotion or patron selected, but the real bond of union and mainspring of action will be the common striving after a life of closer union with God. It will not be a mere matter of attending certain meetings, adding to religious practices, saying certain prayers, but rather the cultivation of a new spirit which will permeate the whole of life, a realization of the call to an apostolate.

Frequent and, if possible, daily Communion will be taken for granted. So will the yearly retreat, in common if it can be arranged.

Even if it be granted that all this is possible, we have to face the objection that it is beginning at the wrong end. "The duty of a priest," it will be said, "is in the first place to secure the essentials—to get people to Sunday Mass and Easter duties. When he has done this it will be time enough to think of putting a high spiritual polish on a select few."

To this it may be answered that the method here described has proved to be the most effective way of bringing back to the church those who have drifted out of touch with it. Those upon whom the admonitions of the priest would make no impression are brought in by the layman trained by the priest for the purpose. Those who have escaped the vigilance of the priest altogether are discovered and captured by the same means. The priest is no longer left to search out and "round up" the lost sheep by him-

self. He has his little band of spiritual scouts, his intelligence department, his rescue party. He has people around him to whom he can give any work at any time—a group far more flexible than the average "committee". "In these days," wrote the Bishop of Tournai in 1903, "no really serious and active parochial life is any longer possible save where the clergy find themselves surrounded by a group, however small, of deeply religious laymen, determined to support them in their laborious ministry." And such a group must be trained. The priest must imitate Our Lord's example not only in public preaching and ministration to all, but in the special work of training apostles.

Indeed the most characteristic feature of the recent Catholic revival on the Continent has been the training of lay apostles, especially among the working classes. As Père Lechien points out,[1] the bulk of the working men can only be reached "by men living in their own surroundings, by apostles dressed in their garb, having ambitions and interests in common with them, speaking their language, sharing their privations and their toil".

It would appear, then, that the best way for the priest to influence the many is to act upon the few. If he only tries to act upon the many, he will probably only succeed in influencing the few.

But there is a third objection which may occur to those who realise the spiritual bearing of social work. They will admit the wisdom of acting upon the few and training an *élite*: but they are puzzled by the advice (given by the experienced) that no special charitable or social work should be included among the objects of the spiritual brotherhood thus formed. "Surely," they will contend, "this is to put religion in

[1] *Un Plan d'Organisation Paroissiale.* Fayt-Manage, Belgium, 1903.

a water-tight compartment, to make it almost selfishly individualistic, to rob it of its social aspect."

On the contrary, it is to promote social work far more effectively than if social work were made part of the programme. Here we meet another paradox, which is always recurring in different forms. The man who works for the souls of others does more for their bodies than the man who works for the body and neglects the soul. If social work has a religious bearing, it is no less true that religious work has a social bearing. The Benedictines have done more for art than the Royal Academy. The sisters of Charity have fed more hungry people than the Charity Organisation Society.

Experience in fact proves that a group of apostolic laymen banded together in a spiritual aim will raise the whole level of social work in a parish and will be ready to meet any social or charitable need that may arise. Though as a body they are committed to no definite activity, as individuals they will be the life and soul of the various parish organisations.

Thus, for example, the Third Order of St. Francis has been a most potent agency for social reform just because its primary aim has been the personal sanctification of its members. Or we may point to the "Companies of the Blessed Sacrament" which flourished in France in the seventeenth century—little groups of laymen (a very few in each group) with an enthusiastic devotion to their Eucharistic Lord. Their zeal expressed itself in social work of which the record is amazing, and they anticipated many of our modern methods and institutions.[1] Or, again, we may instance the Eucharistic League which exists in Belgium to-day, over and above the Confraternities or larger groups of devout laymen. The members of this League in any

[1] See my *Retreats for the People* (Sands), pp. 242 ff.

one parish may only number three or four: but they are the mainspring of the parish and the right hand of the parish priest.[1]

The formation of this small apostolic group in a parish does not, of course, dispense with the necessity for larger groups organised for special purposes, such as a Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Care Committee, a club committee, a branch of the C.Y.M.S., a study club and the rest, according as circumstances suggest. On the contrary the smaller group prepares the way for and gives vitality to the larger societies. About the organisation of these latter something may now be said.

A priest may find himself in a parish where no such societies exist, or where they are languishing, or again, where they were causing friction. Where is he to begin?

From all quarters comes the advice—"*Get hold of the men first*". Associations for women and children are more easily formed and the temptation is to begin with the less formidable task. But the result is likely to be that the men will hang back, thinking that their womenkind sufficiently represent the family. The corner-stone of parish organisation should be the spiritual association for the men. The rest of the building may then be put in hand—spiritual associations for mothers and young women, guilds for children, societies for social, charitable, recreative purposes. In this way all the institutions will be instinct with a genuine religious spirit.[2] There will be no mistaking of means for ends, or worship of merely material results.

The importance of beginning with the spiritual formation of the men, and especially of the young

[1] See my *Retreats for the People* (Sands), pp. 244-246.
[2] So Père Lechien, *loc. cit.*

men, has been insisted upon very frequently by our Bishops. The following quotations are taken from Mr. Charles Quinn's excellent pamphlet on *The Catholic Young Men's Society* :—

"I attach far more importance to the organisation and training of our young men than to the organisation of any other class in our congregations. Keep the young men loyally attached to their religion, and all the other classes will be secured. They are more tempted, more exposed and less cared for than others. Yet their influence, even as young men, and much more when they become fathers of families, would be paramount in every congregation if they were good practical Catholics and were well organised" (Cardinal Vaughan).

"My clergy tell me that whenever they want anything done they have only to go to their Young Men's Society to find plenty ready to assist them" (Archbishop Whiteside).

"It is difficult to exaggerate the effect which the good conduct and intelligent action of our young Catholic men may have upon the progress of religion in England" (Bishop Hedley).

"The Catholic young men are the hope of the Church's future, and never in the past has this been so true as it is at the present day" (Bishop Casartelli).

"I do not know anything better for a congregation than to have a flourishing Young Men's Society in its midst" (Archbishop Smith).

Similar quotations might be multiplied. The backbone of a parish should be the spiritual organisation of young men. How often is this just the one thing that is lacking! One may sometimes see a parish procession—the little girls demure in white dresses and blue sashes, the boys subdued in clean collars, the maidens and the mothers, the middle-aged and old men—all very consoling and edifying, but we look in vain for the flower of the flock and the spring of the year, the young men who are "the hope of the

Church's future". It may be a trouble to get them—they do not fall into line so readily as their sisters and aunts—but the trouble is worth taking and *should be taken first of all.*

If the men are not spiritually organised, the best way to organise them is through just such an *élite* as has been described. If an organisation exists but is slack and inefficient, again the *élite* may be formed and used as a tonic: they will do the recruiting, the stirring up. When this main task has been accomplished, particular needs may be met—the clubs, the temperance society, the S.V.P. and the rest. To start with, say the League of the Cross, or the Billiard Club, as the central organisation, is to bar all those who do not wish to take the pledge or to play billiards. Even to start with the Federation may be to exclude some who persist in regarding the Federation as political. Whereas if the basic society is purely spiritual in scope it will unite all who can be got to take any kind of interest in their religion, and the various departmental societies will fare all the better for being put in their proper place. Thus in the German-speaking countries especially it has been found a very successful plan to make the Sodality the base of parish organisation and to work the other societies (S.V.P., clubs, etc.) as autonomous sections of the Sodality. In this way a supply of workers in the various sections is secured and all the societies are kept at a high level of efficiency. It does not follow that a lad must join the Sodality or Confraternity before he is allowed to join the Brigade: this would be to exclude those who have, in the first instance, to be attracted by a uniform. But it does mean that the Brigade prepared lads for the Sodality and that the Sodality provides driving power in the choicer spirits in the Brigade.

So with this organisation of the women. If a good foundation is laid in the way of a zealous Sodality or Guild, the various departmental needs, social and charitable, can be met as they arise. The volunteers will be at hand to start the mothers' meetings, the needlework guild, the Ladies of Charity, the Catholic Women's League, the cookery classes or whatever circumstances may suggest. There will be proper co-ordination, and those jealousies will be avoided which wreck so many good works. The parish institutions will grow out of the heart of the parish.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PRIEST AND NON-CATHOLIC ORGANISATIONS.

THE question of co-operation with non-Catholics in social and charitable work has given rise to prolonged and exasperated controversies. Again and again it has divided Catholic opinion and in some cases caused serious prejudice to Catholic action. The Holy See has repeatedly spoken on the matter both in general and with a view to particular cases: but the directions of the Pope have usually been claimed by both sides as giving support to their policy. The energy which might have been devoted to useful work has too often been dissipated in mutual recriminations among Catholics themselves.

The question is one of grave practical importance, and, as it is bound to be raised from time to time, it is well to have principles on which to shape our conduct and to secure, as far as possible, a general agreement as to the policy which best suits our particular circumstances. For the principles we look to the Holy See: for their general application, to our Bishops.

The Holy See has constantly urged the necessity of penetrating social action with the spirit of religion. While in the sphere of politics there is "ample matter for legitimate differences of opinion" and "the single reserve being made of the rights of justice and truth, all may strive to bring into actual working the ideas believed likely to be more conducive than others to

the general welfare,"[1] in the organisation of social action, on the other hand, a frankly Catholic spirit is desirable since social questions are so closely connected with religion. Thus, for instance, where existing labour unions are likely to expose Catholic members to danger in faith or morals, Catholic unions should be founded if circumstances permit: or, if this is impossible owing to lack of numbers or other circumstances, steps should be taken to counteract the danger.

Such would appear to be the drift, for instance, of the Encyclical *Singulari quadam caritate* (24th September, 1912) addressed to the Catholics of Germany by Pope Pius X. The exclusively Catholic unions are declared to represent the ideal: but for practical reasons Catholics may join unions to which non-Catholics are admitted, though in this case they should also join Catholic societies and be trained in Catholic social principals.

> We do not refuse permission to Catholics *with all precautions* to work for the common good with non-Catholics to obtain for the worker a better lot, to obtain a more just organisation as regards work and wages, or for any other useful and honest purpose.

In France, too, the question has arisen in a somewhat different form. Among the errors of the *Sillon* the Holy Father noted the tendency to co-operate with non-Catholics in circumstances where such co-operation was tantamount to a surrender of religious principle. On the other hand a very considerable measure of co-operation in social reform has been allowed between Catholics and non-Catholics by the Holy See in cases where such principle has not been prejudiced.[2] Much, of course, depends upon the relative number of Catholics in a country

[1] Leo XIII., *Sapientiae Christianae.*

[2] See, for instance, *Switzerland To-day*, by V. M. Crawford.

and the aims and methods of the non-Catholic organizations which they are invited to join.

In England, where Catholics form but a small proportion of the whole population, our circumstances require a large measure of co-operation with non-Catholics in social action. Cardinal Bourne, addressing the Catholic Trade Unionists at the National Catholic Congress held in Plymouth, July, 1913, is reported to have said that

> The question was frequently asked how far Catholics and non-Catholics should unite in subjects that affected the welfare of the whole country. He had not hesitated to say abroad and at Rome that here in England the only way to obtain any influence in any movement was to take part in it. His Eminence thought that Catholics ought to unite with non-Catholics in any national movement, because if they left it aside they would in the end be left aside themselves, and then they would be left altogether. By very earnest, determined and energetic action they would make themselves heard and would invariably gain their point in the long run.[1]

The same point, it may be remembered, was constantly insisted upon by Cardinal Manning. By co-operation with the commendable efforts which are being made by various unsectarian societies to cope with housing problems, sweating evils, cruelty to children and the like, we may help to abolish scandals which the Church denounces, and we may lead our countrymen to see that we have a practical compassion for the poor and suffering and a real interest in the public good.

Yet in proportion as we are called to join forces with non-Catholics for the remedy of social evils grows the necessity for strengthening our own grasp of Catholic principles and deepening our religious spirit. As we

[1] *Catholic Times*, 11th July, 1913.

have seen, the Holy See makes this a condition of such joint action. Measures must be taken to minimise the risk which is always present. To quote the Bishop of Northampton :—

> We must recognise that there is risk even in the most attractive and apparently harmless of such associations. For the sake of the higher good risks must be taken. But the best insurance against risk is a clear consciousness that, outside the shield of the Church, risk there always is—the risk of false ideas only dimly perceived ; the risk of true ideas pushed to extremes ; the risk of compromises which seldom fail to prove compromising ; the perennial risk of becoming entangled in the " non-sectarian " snare.[1]

Or again, the Archbishop of Liverpool has pointed out[2] that the most urgent need at the present time would seem to be to bring home to Catholic working men Catholic principles on social questions, and that this is all the more important in view of the pronouncement of the Holy See (referred to above) in the case of German trade unions.

We are thus furnished with a principle which enables us to avoid the two extremes, advocates of which are sometimes moved to lift up their voices in the Catholic Press. There is what may be called the " ring-fence policy " supported by those who would have us shut ourselves up in a rigid enclosure and exclude all participation with non-Catholics in social action ; and there are those who favour what we might term the " free-lance policy " and who see no need for social organisation or concerted study and action among Catholics as such. The watchword of the one party is " concentrate " that of the other is " permeate ". But in truth we must do both. We must neither stand wholly

[1] *The Church and Social Reformers* (Catholic Social Guild Phamphlets ; second series).

[2] *Catholic Social Year Book for* 1913 (Introduction).

aloof from secular movements nor must we wholly surrender ourselves to them.[1]

The task of the priest, then, with regard to non-sectarian bodies is threefold. He must himself, to some extent, take part in them; he must encourage and train Catholic layfolk to do the same; and he must take all those precautionary measures upon which the Holy See has laid so much stress.

That the priest himself should serve on public committees and establish relations with non-sectarian organisations is often desirable and sometimes necessary. If he does not do so, Catholic interests may be unrepresented and Catholic liberties imperilled. Moreover, a priest may have certain dealings with such organisations which cannot be relegated to the layman.[2]

But the work of a priest will be considerably simplified if, instead of entangling himself in a number of committees he will train and push forward lay representatives.

> The priest is often put on these committees not because he is particularly wanted, but because he cannot get the idea out of his head that nothing can go right if he has not a finger in it. . . . If we can see how many committees we can escape rather than how many we can serve on, we shall probably save more souls, and the committees will not suffer.[3]

Here, again, the parochial study club is invaluable. The priest, even though he cannot find time to direct

[1] See my *Catholic Social Work in Germany* (Sands, 1s.), where the matter is treated at length.

[2] For the work and opportunities of priests in public institutions, see Canon Keatinge's *The Priest: his Character and Work*, chap. xv. He points out that even where a priest's official position in an institution is vague and precarious, enormous influence may be secured by persistent tact. This point has been emphasised by all whom I have consulted in the matter.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

it, will at least be in touch with it. He will encourage those to join it who might, later on, be likely to take part in public work as Poor Law Guardians, Town Councillors, members of Civic Leagues, Care Committees, and the like. It is a deplorable fact that in many districts Catholics who complain that they are unrepresented simply have no candidate capable of representing them worthily. This is not the complete explanation of the absence of Catholics in many places from public life, but it is a partial explanation, and gives a handle to those who wish to see Catholics excluded. On the other hand, much trouble may be caused in a parish owing to the fact that some more or less undesirable hothead of a Catholic has pushed himself forward into public life in the absence of other candidates and has become a thorn in the side of the local clergy.

A study club which has grown out of the heart of the parish will supply trained men who enjoy the confidence of the clergy and faithful as a whole. Their corners will have been taken off by the gentle process of friendly criticism, they will be in touch with Catholic needs, and they will have a grasp of Catholic principles. The annual retreat, which is becoming so popular among members of study clubs, will give them that unselfish devotion to work and that breadth of mind which do so much to break down prejudice.

Every encouragement should be given by the clergy to Catholic laymen engaged in public life. They often find themselves in very delicate positions, and if they are treated with coldness by the priest a considerable strain may be put upon their loyalty. On the one hand, they cannot be expected to be constantly ringing the presbytery bell and asking what they are to do next; on the other, they may reasonably feel discouragement if their own priests do not back them up.

The priest, then, should encourage laymen to come

forward not only as Councillors and Guardians but as members of other public bodies, Trade Union officials, committee members of the Workers' Educational Association, and the like. Objections are sometimes raised on the score of lack of material, but a little patient investigation will generally reveal unsuspected possibilities. That young lawyer or tradesman or weaver or clerk is only waiting to be asked. He has more brains and more dormant zeal than we suspected, but he will not come forward of his own accord.

Is it beyond the province of a priest, for instance, to point out to a promising young Catholic workman that the cause of the Church as well as that of the country would be better served if there were more Catholics among Labour representatives in Parliament? That ambition is not as hopeless as it might appear. Let the young workman improve his mind in a Catholic study club and at the same time take an active interest in his Trade Union branch. He will probably not find much difficulty in getting on the committee if he shows a real interest in the work, since the vast majority of Trade Unionists shows none. The secretaryship may follow. Meanwhile, success in local administration may point him out as a suitable candidate for the Central Executive Committee. If he gets no further he will still be in a position to exert much influence for good. But a general secretaryship may follow, and (who knows?) he may be asked to represent an industrial constituency in the House of Commons. Young men in other spheres of life, too, starting with greater advantages might well be encouraged to work their way up in public life. Much generous ambition of this kind might be evoked by the priest.

A word may be added as to the attitude of the clergy towards other more or less organised movements.

With regard to Socialism the advice has been given

by Bishops and experienced priests that pulpit denunciations should be avoided. In the first place, they may merely lead to unprofitable irritation. Many people do come to Church to hear the Word of God, and they find small spiritual refreshment in tirades against a movement which has little interest for them. On the other hand, they may actually have some acquaintance with socialistic movements and may contrast the facts as they know them with the description drawn by the preacher from Father Cathrein's excellent handbook. The best way of counteracting extreme Socialistic tendencies in a parish is to start a social study club, and to persuade it *not* to begin by discussing Socialism.

As for Syndicalism, it is hardly an organised movement in this country, and in any case is poles apart from Socialism. Here, more than ever, is the study club method to be preferred to that of the pulpit.

Secondly, it may be suggested that the question as to whether or not a Catholic can be a Socialist should not be debated in public. It inevitably leads to misunderstandings and is apt to generate more heat than light. Still less, of course, should the question of refusing absolution to avowed Socialists be discussed in the press. Each case must be dealt with on its merits, and sweeping generalisations are apt to produce a false conscience. Nor is the Holy See disposed to regard with much favour the taking part by priests in public debates with Socialists.[1] On the other hand, the fact that a Trade Union Lodge is controlled by militant Socialists is no reason for discouraging Catholic members from attending its meetings; on the contrary, they should be encouraged to do so and to take active measures in maintaining sound Trade Unionist principles.

[1] See *Rome and the Social Question*, pp. 9-10.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

AN important task before Catholics in this country, under the guidance of the clergy, is the application of Catholic social principles to our actual conditions. Without such application the principles remain sterile; without the principles social science will be false and social action misguided.

This work of constructing a practical social science on the basis of Catholic principles has made great progress in Germany, Belgium, and elsewhere. Catholic social schools have grown up and have elaborated their social programmes, and exercised a marked influence on social legislation and public opinion. True there is room for differences of opinion even within these schools; social science in its entirety cannot be immediately deduced from revealed dogma. Yet these differences are slight as compared with the vast differences of principle which sunder non-Catholic sociologists from each other and from ourselves. Under the influence of a healthy Catholic school, extreme positions are abandoned by individual Catholics. The Catholic social platform is one, though it is large enough to contain various groups. Where there is little or no effort made by the Catholics of a country to evolve a Catholic social science, we shall find that a number of Catholics are (unknown to themselves) off the platform altogether.

Now let us examine these various Catholic social movements—these efforts to apply Catholic principles —and note their general characteristics. We are now concerned not with their differences, but with certain qualities which they possess in common.

In the first place let it be pointed out once more for the reassurance of the timid, that they enjoy not merely the grudging toleration but the warm support and encouragement of the Pope and the Bishops. Indeed, these movements have often been inaugurated by ecclesiastical leaders. Bishop Ketteler led a Catholic social campaign in Germany and Cardinal Mermillod presided over international congresses at Fribourg long before Leo XIII. gave an impetus to such movements by the *Rerum Novarum.* The encouragement given to Catholic social action to-day by the Bishops in all parts of the world has been sufficiently illustrated.

Nor must it be supposed that these social movements are new in the history of the Church. Catholicism, as Professor Duthoit reminds us,[1] is essentially social, as appears from the teaching of its Doctors and its Popes as well as from the practice of its Saints. What is relatively new is the growth of specific industrial evils, and, in consequence, the particular applications of traditional Catholic principles which are required to meet these evils.

There are too many of us who seem to imagine that Pope Leo XIII. has dispensed us from the trouble of thinking. They speak of the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* as though it contained a ready-made solution for the actual social problems which confront us in this country. They seem to imagine that it will tell us how to vote, and what to think of the Labour Party or the Minority Report.

[1] *Vers l'Organisation Professionnelle.*

They do not realise that in the first place the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* is to be taken, not by itself, but in conjunction with the other Encyclicals ; and that, secondly, these Encyclicals are of so much value, not because they contain anything startlingly new, but because they are a masterly setting forth of Catholic principles ; and that, thirdly, such principles need to be applied to particular circumstances. Further, these people are not always careful to distinguish this statement of traditional principles from particular applications which the Pope may make of them in the course of the Encyclicals. We cannot, for instance, assume that everything that Pope Leo said about the Continental Socialists of his day may be applied to all who call themselves Socialists in England at present.

As a matter of fact, Pope Leo himself called upon Catholics to work out the application of Catholic principles to particular social questions. He did not mean us to use his Encyclical as a fetish. He did not wish us to murmur complacently whenever a definite scheme of reform was put forward, "Ah! I see you have a scheme. I will not trouble to examine it. I content myself with the Catholic principles as laid down in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*." We might as well content ourselves with the binomial theorem.

What we have to do is to soak ourselves in the Catholic principles, to master the teaching of the Encyclicals, and then to take in hand the laborious work of testing our social institutions and measures and proposals by them. To do this we must know something of these institutions and measures and proposals. We shall need concerted study and endless patience. Even when we have done all that can be done there will be much room for differences of opinion. Catholic social science is not a mere deduction from Catholic principles. Catholics may be divided as to the merits of two

schemes, both of which are in accordance with Catholic principles, the difference between them arising from other sources.

Nevertheless, it would be a fatal mistake to undervalue these principles. The more people can be got to study the Encyclicals the better. They will give us our basis, even though they do not exempt us from the labour of building. It is true to say that no other stable foundation is possible. In this sense, at least, the social question is a Catholic question—social science demands the support of Catholic principles.

Most English writers on social science would flatly deny that Catholic dogma has anything to do with their subject. True, they are dogmatic enough themselves; they have certain assumptions, expressed or implied, which give a direction to all that they write. To deny revelation is as much a dogma as to affirm it; and these writers do commonly deny it, with consequences which affect their theories. The result is disaster.

On the other hand, we find Catholics who seem to imagine that social science is a mere department of theology, and can be deduced in all its details from dogma. The result is apathy and a complete failure to exert influence on current social movements.

We may speak of Catholic social science, but we must understand what we mean. We do not mean a science which is merely deduced from Catholic dogma. We mean a science which rests on Catholic dogma. There is all the difference between the two. It is one thing to secure a site, and quite another to design and erect a building, though the nature of the building may to some extent be determined by the site.

The mistake made by most sociologists is that they say, "I won't have your rock. I prefer to build on the sand."

The mistake made by some Catholics is that they say, "Having been provided with a site, we are dispensed from the necessity of building on it".

Thus, for instance, as M. Duthoit points out, there are certain principles in Trade Unionism which may be deduced from Catholic principles, more or less directly. On Catholic principles we advocate professional organisation, and justify some intervention of the law in the domain of labour. Further questions—what form these organisations should take, how far the law should intervene, etc.—are not to be settled merely by an appeal to Catholic principles; they leave room for differences of opinion and depend upon local circumstances. Yet even here our conclusions, though not deduced from Catholic principles, should be coloured by the Catholic spirit. Here especially comes in the need of careful and concerted social study by Catholics. A number of Catholic students working together in a systematic way may carry the application of Catholicism to social problems much further than the solitary Catholic student who is apt to import his prepossessions and prejudices (political and otherwise) into his work.[1]

Hence, we must distinguish between the bare Catholic principles and their embodiment in practical schemes. The former may be acquired with little trouble by reading Papal Encyclicals. The latter is a slow and laborious task demanding co-operation and wide knowledge.

Now, this preoccupation about social study is apt to make some good people impatient. They tell us that what we want is not theory, but practice. They assure us that these study clubs and debates and conferences are waste of time; it would be much better to

[1] For striking examples of this, see Maurice Eblé, *Les écoles Catholiques d'economie politique et sociale en France* (Paris, 1905).

take off our coats and go slumming. They declare that our Utopias and ideal reconstructions of society are of no use whatever.

To all of which we reply that the world is, in the last result, governed by ideas, and that if the Catholic social movement is to be fruitful, it must be a movement of ideas, and not of platitudes. The individualist movement was a movement of ideas, so was the collectivist movement which sprang from it—and rent it limb from limb. "Is it not necessary, and in conformity with the historic mission of Catholicism," asks Professor Duthoit, "that Catholics should oppose to these destructive movements a movement which will construct and heal? They are bound to do so all the more because, as even their enemies admit, they hold the solution of the social problem."

If we look at the most successful Catholic social movements abroad, we see that they have been in the first place movements of ideas. The ideas have been generated by groups and schools of Catholic social students. But the ideas have not remained ideas. They have translated themselves into practical action of a most effective kind. Professor Max Turmann's excellent work on the progress of social Catholicism since the publication of *Rerum Novarum* gives us an account of the enormous amount of practical social reform which has resulted from Catholic social study.

"But these Catholic social movements are mixed up with politics," it is objected. The objection is found in the non-Catholic Press of all countries. Wherever Catholics get together in order to promote social reform on Catholic lines their action is at once described as a political dodge. It is vain to point out that Catholics of most diverse political views are uniting in the movement. Every politician knows better. The whole thing is a dark and sinister scheme.

But is it only the anti-Catholic Press that makes this mistake? Unfortunately not.

One of the great difficulties with which a Catholic social movement nearly always has to contend is the tendency of Catholics themselves to regard it as party politics in disguise. The tendency comes from the mistaken belief that social reform is merely a matter of party politics. To that belief a number of Catholics in this country cling with obstinate tenacity.

Of course, it may happen that the social activity of Catholics in a country is mainly displayed in the field of party politics. There may be a Catholic party —and support of that party may be the only course open to a Catholic in view of the anti-Christian character of the opposing parties. But this need not be the case; even where it is the case, political action is not the only method by which social reforms are promoted.

The *Année Sociale Internationale* for 1911 supplies some interesting observations on this subject. In France, as elsewhere, people are getting tired of party politics, and are turning to wide schemes of social reform, which have originated outside Parliament and are supported independently of political parties. Former antagonists are meeting on the common ground of social reform. Even politicians of all shades are being driven, by the pressure of public opinion, to favour measures which thirty years ago were only advocated by a despised minority. Thus the Old Age Pensions Bill was opposed by only seven Deputies or Senators; it was supported by nine hundred.

The leading members of the various political parties in France all recognise this new tendency. Socialists, Radicals, Moderates, and Monarchists, right, left, and centre, all have adopted a social programme which

would make older politicians turn in their graves. M. Ribot lately told the Senate that the old political battles were dead and gone, and that social questions were absorbing the attention of all.

> Class egoism has always been a fault. To-day it would be an unpardonable fault. It would be suicide.

In like manner wrote M. Charmes, in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, on the very eve of the elections. The people, he said, had become indifferent to party politics. They were much more interested in trade unions. As the Marquis de La-Tour-du-Pin puts it, people are only interested in social politics; they only support a party in so far as it appears to embody a social idea.

The same tendency exists in England, though its action has been somewhat obscured by recent political events. The real claimants for popular support are not so much rival politicians as rival programmes of social reform, programmes which cut across the existing political parties. An increasing number of people are bent not so much on keeping this or that politician in office, as in forcing this or that measure upon any Government that may happen to be in power. An increasing number of social reforms are being lifted out of the ruck of party politics altogether, and established as measures about which the nation has made up its mind.

This state of things is all to the advantage of Catholics. It is no longer a question of trying to get what we can out of this or that politician; it is a question of trying to give a right direction to ideas which must be accepted by any politician. In other words, we have to deal not with the politician, but with the people. Obviously this opens up to us a much wider field, and offers far more opportunities of making our

influence felt. Pére Leroy[1] has pointed out the advantages which social action possesses over political action. Social action may enlist the services of all: political action will only appeal to the few. Social action may be continuous; political action is almost necessarily intermittent. Political action tends to divisions; social action leads to unity. Political action is apt to be insincere; social action is more likely to be disinterested. Political action is subject to reverses —the party is turned out and the work begins again; social action may make continual progress. We do not mean to imply that political action can be neglected. We must have legislation, and we must deal with legislators. But legislation is not the sole determinant of national well-being; nor is the support of this or that party the only outlet for our civic activities. Stir the country about the sweating evil, and anti-sweating legislation is bound to result.

We have looked at certain general features of the Catholic social movement as it is working itself out in various parts of the world. We have seen that it is not merely a speculative movement, but is, at the same time, ideal and practical: that it is not merely tolerated, but cordially encouraged by the hierarchy: that it is not a novelty in the Church, but a traditional feature: and, finally that it is not to be identified with political action.

The future belongs to those who have the keenest foresight. People often agitate a great deal and expend much energy and money to no purpose. The main thing is not agitation or even action, but *opportune action directed to a definite end.* How many generous undertakings grow feeble, flicker and die, merely because they fail to recognise social realities—the aspirations and needs of the working classes, the innermost thoughts of the masses, the evolution of ideas

[1] *Pages sociales.*

and of institutions. It is not safe to lose touch with actual life. *Omne vivum ex vivo :* it is life which gives life.[1]

Mere goodwill is not sufficient in these complex matters. It will mislead us unless it be accompanied by a social sense.

We are entering a period of social history which promises to be highly dramatic. The rival armies of capital and labour are organising for a colossal struggle. How far that struggle will be attended by violence and ruin will depend in large measure upon the efforts which are made in the immediate future to bring about a peaceful understanding and to promote social reform.

Catholics, who represent a gospel of peace and progress are in duty bound to distinguish themselves among the foremost workers. But social action, if it is to be good and true and sound, cannot be undertaken in a hurry. In this matter it is better to abstain altogether than to take a wrong line. Great interests (those of the Church first of all) are at stake ; and those interests may be compromised by ignorance or want of skill, however well intentioned. Hence we must learn before we act.[2]

These are wise words. The scene of social action is full of pitfalls and precipices, and a rash step may be fatal. We cannot stand still (unless we wish to be frozen), but we must advance with caution, roped together, and testing every step. Inevitably some will wish to press forward rashly, others to hang back over-timidly. We must be patient and avoid jostling each other.

We have unique advantages. Our Catholic principles, if resolutely clung to and steadily applied, are capable of bringing order out of chaos. We need not be dismayed by the comparative smallness of our numbers ;

[1] *Année Sociale Internationale*, 1911 (Introduction).
[2] *Ibid.*

we need only be afraid of our own apathy and lack of confidence. A compact though small body of men and women with sound principles and a resolute policy may affect the social currents of a great nation.

But we shall do nothing without steady effort, based on careful study. The first thing is to realise that such study and effort is demanded of us by our profession of the Catholic Faith. Social action, in these days especially, is not a matter that Catholics can regard as optional. We may recall the words addressed by the present Pope to the French Bishops :—

> In the conflict of interests, and above all in the fight against the forces of injustice, a man's virtue and even his sanctity are not always sufficient to secure his daily bread. The social machinery needs to be organised in such a way as by its own action to paralyse the efforts of evildoers and to give all men of goodwill access to a legitimate share of temporal felicity. *We earnestly desire you to take an active part in the organisation of society to this end.*

APPENDIX A.

SOME PAPAL ENCOURAGEMENTS OF SOCIAL ACTION BY THE CLERGY.

LEO XIII. 1. Extract from the Encyclical to the Bishops of Italy on the Education of the Clergy and the Exercise of the Sacred Ministry (8th December, 1902).

"It is evident, Venerable Brethren, that all our above recommendations so far from prejudicing the social activity of the clergy, tend to promote it in the highest degree. Such social action has frequently been commended by Us as a need of our age. In exacting the faithful observance of the rules which We have recalled, We are helping to protect that which ought to be the life and soul of such action.

"Let it here be repeated once more and with greater emphasis: the clergy must go to the Christian people who are on all sides surrounded by snares and who are tempted by all sorts of delusive promises, and especially by Socialism, to abandon the faith of their fathers."

(The Holy Father goes on to say that priests should promote among the laity "those associations which are recognised to be really efficacious in promoting the moral and material amelioration of the people".)

2. From The Response to Cardinal Oreglia at the Annual Reception of the Cardinals (24th December, 1902. For Italian text see *Civiltá*, 17th Jan. 1903).

"We have also encouraged the clergy to enter, with certain precautions, the same field of activity (*viz.* Christian

Democracy): for every judicious and profitable enterprise of genuine charity is in accordance with the vocation of the Catholic priesthood. Now is it not a real and most opportune form of charity to give oneself with zeal and disinterestedness to the amelioration of the spiritual condition and temporal lot of the multitudes?"

PIUS X. 1. EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE UNIONE ECONOMICO-SOCIALE OF ITALY (20th February, 1907).

"See to it that all who are members (sc. of the Syndicates or Unions) are duly instructed by those who are familiar with the nature and aim of this kind of association, in the duties and the rights of Christian workers and in the teaching of the Church and the Pontifical documents as regards labour questions. The co-operation of the clergy will be very fruitful here. They will find, too, in this work fresh resources which will render more efficacious their sacred ministry among the people. Working men, thus trained, will become not merely good Trade Unionists but also sturdy auxiliaries of the priest in the diffusion and defence of the practice of Christian teaching."

2. TO THE ABBÉ FRANÇOIS OF THE DIOCESE OF CAMBRAI IN PRIVATE AUDIENCE, March, 1905. (See the *Actes Sociaux* published by *l'Action Populaire*, No. 49-50, p. 44.)

"Tell your venerable Archbishop of the great satisfaction with which I learn that he has appointed two priests to devote themselves particularly to the farmers and their labourers. I wish that all the rural clergy knew, as well as their theology, those matters which interest the peasantry. They can never do too much to show how the Church loves the working classes."

APPENDIX B

MGR. RADINI-TEDESCHI ON THE PRIEST'S MISSION.

MGR. RADINI-TEDESCHI was the prelate chosen by Leo XIII. to organise the Catholic movement in Central Italy. His address delivered at the Fourteenth Catholic Congress of Italy (Fiesole, September, 1896) may be regarded, says Canon Dehon, as the authoritative expression of the Pope's views as regards the social action of the clergy, and it received the special approbation of his Holiness. The whole address has been published in French by the Bonne Presse of Paris; the main points are here given, partly in the form of quotations, partly in a synopsis.

Mgr. Radini-Tedeschi began by pointing to a widespread and pernicious error as regards the priest's sphere of work. Many people wished to confine his activities to the church and the sacristy and to exclude him from social action. It was not surprising that the enemies of the Church should take this line; but it was astonishing and discouraging to find the same view put forward by some of the laity and even of the clergy themselves.

"Gentlemen, the priest absolutely must take his place in social life. He must make courageous efforts to secure that place; and having secured it he must occupy it till death. This is his mission, his imperative duty. If he does not fulfil it—and fulfil it not merely as a citizen but as a priest—he is guilty of treason, he disobeys orders, he wrongs his country, the Church, and Jesus Christ.

"Indeed, his mission is Christ's mission. Both are vast. Both are unbounded by place, time, persons, and classes. The priest's mission, like that of Christ, cannot be limited

by the individual, the family, the household, the altar. It must, like the truth of which the priest is the mouthpiece, the faith which he interprets, and the morality which he defends—it must, I say, extend to all departments of human life.

"He has, then, a mission which is eminently social. He must, at the cost of whatever effort or sacrifice, take his share in social life, animate it, inspire it, bring Jesus Christ into it."

The speaker then insisted that social action on the part of the priest is necessary for the saving of souls :—

"All are aware of the close connection between the social life and the spiritual life of a Christian. They are inseparable. Upon the spiritual life of the individual depends the health of social life : nor can the spiritual life maintain itself and avoid extinction unless the social life comes to its assistance. Thus, to withdraw the priest from his spiritual ministrations would be to endeavour to extinguish all social life ; while to exclude him from social action would tend to stifle all spiritual life.

"If society is to live it must have social truth and social morality, justice, charity, honesty, the Decalogue and Christian social principles. How then dare it exclude the priest who is the guardian of these treasures? This would be to exclude the soul from the body. . . . It would be to exclude Christ."

The effects of such exclusion are next described. They are seen in the modern lawlessness and disorganisation of economics, politics, and morality. Priests must take an active part in restoring the social order.

"In a word, a terrible catastrophe is inevitable unless the priest fulfils in its entirety his public and social mission."

The strict injunctions of Leo XIII. on this point are here emphasised. The social action of the priest is a special necessity of the times. *Salus populi, suprema lex esto* :—

"When the nation is in danger, every one becomes a soldier. But at such times the priest is more than a soldier. He is a leader."

Society to-day is in extreme peril. The danger lies within. There is much for the layman to do, but the priest must take the initiative. All honour to those priests who are mindful of the divine precept to "go" (*Ite*) and not merely to *wait* :—

"They are apostles, and so they go forth from the Cenacle and by the efficacy of their doctrine, the power of divine grace, and their zealous labours, they accomplish that marvel for which the world is waiting—a new social redemption."

The social action of the priest should be characterised by—

1. The spirit of our Lord, which we must have in abundance if we are to impart it to others.

2. A great loyalty to the Pope—the fundamental note of all Catholic action and the special need of our time.

3. A particular devotion to the Immaculate Virgin, who will inspire in him that combination of strength and of almost motherly gentleness which will make him compassionate and patient amid suffering and will enable him to give to the laity that new life which they expect from him.

"The social action of the priest should extend to all Catholic movements, to social science and study, to the different forms of Catholic association and especially to Congresses and Committees, the press, young men and women, mothers of families, working men, labourers, artisans, the people—and all this from the religious, moral, economic, temporal and spiritual points of view according to needs and opportunities.

"I do not say that every priest should occupy himself with all these matters: excess is always excess and is not without peril. But I do say that from the Spiritual Exercises which form men to God, down to the co-operative societies and banks, there is no sphere of work in which the clergy should not take an interest."

As to the preparation required for this task, the priest should engage in serious study to be afterwards translated into practical work. It is for the Bishops to see whether and how the seminary students may be better trained than

at present for social work. The social conferences of the clergy which are held in various countries are deserving of all praise. It is to be hoped that such conferences will be introduced, under the direction of the Bishops, among the priests of Italy, who might thus study methods and needs and encourage one another in their good works. There is need of much hard work, of plain speaking and bold action, of self-sacrifice and enterprising zeal.

"You must encourage and direct laymen of good will. You must build up the young men. Above all you must seek out and train with special care those dear young people who have received from God the precious gift of that special vocation—so necessary in these days—the vocation to the social apostolate."

Mgr. Radini-Tedeschi then described the audience at which Leo XIII. confided to him the great work of organising Catholic action in Italy. Priests are bound in conscience to take part in the work thus imposed upon them by the Vicar of Christ.

"As for you, Catholic laymen, champions of your faith, I say to you: Look to your priests, see, we are ready. With the Pope and at the bidding of the Pope, the priests are wholly at your service."

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